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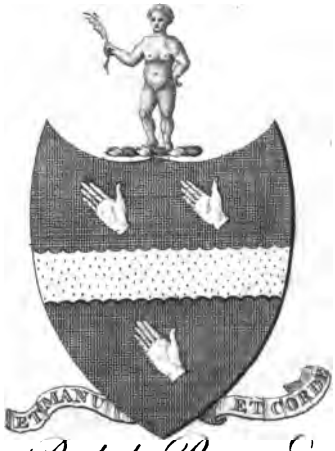

Ralph Bates Esq.r

Vet. Fr. II A. 1866

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

VOLTAIRE.

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OF

VOLTAIRE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH.

DUBLIN:

Printed for Meſſrs. MONCRIEFFE, WALKER, EXSHAW, WILSON, JENKIN, BURTON, WHITE, BYRNE, MARCHBANK, CASH, and HERRY.

MDCCLXXXIV.

Extract of a Letter from Paris, dated May 2, 1784,

Which may ſerve as a PREFACE to this Edition of the MEMOIRS of VOLTAIRE.

—THIS is not all the preſent news of Paris. They ſpeak very much of the Memoirs of Voltaire, written by himſelf, two or three Editions of which have already been ſeized, and ſeven Bookſellers impriſoned. Voltaire is called *ungrateful.* The King of Pruſſia

is highly irritated, and is ſaid to be very buſily employed in writing an anſwer to theſe Memoirs. The friends of Voltaire allow them to be authentic, and nobody doubts it. The Ambaſſador of *****, his moſt intimate friend, has aſſured me he threw them in the fire; but his deceitful Secretary, had in all probability, reſerved a copy. M. de Beaumarchais likewiſe is accuſed of imprudence. But accuſations are fruitleſs. The Memoirs

moirs are really written by Voltaire, and muſt ſoon or late become public. This Voltaire is a ſort of malignant ſpirit, who came upon earth only to embitter the cup of life, and afterwards laugh at our wry faces.

MEMOIRS

OF

VOLTAIRE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I WAS tired of the lazy and turbulent life led at Paris, of the multitude of Petit-Maitres, of bad books printed with the approbation of Censors and the privilege of the King, of the cabals and parties among the learned, and of the mean arts, plagiarism, and book-making which dishonour literature. In the year 1733, I met with a

young lady who happened to think nearly as I did, and who took a reſolution to go with me and ſpend ſeveral years in the country, there to cultivate her underſtanding, far from the hurry and tumult of the world.

This Lady was no other than the Marchioneſs de Châtelet, who of all the women in France, had a mind the moſt capable of the different branches of ſcience. Her father, the Baron de Breteuil, had taught her Latin, which ſhe underſtood as perfectly as Madame Dacier. She knew by rote the moſt beautiful paſſages in Horace, Virgil, and Lucretius, and all the philoſophical works

of

of Cicero were familiar to her. Her inclinations were more ſtrongly bent towards the mathematics and metaphyſics than any other ſtudies, and ſeldom have there been united in the ſame perſon ſo much juſtneſs of diſcernment, and elegance of taſte, with ſo ardent a deſire of information.

Yet notwithſtanding her love of literature, ſhe was not the leſs fond of the world, and thoſe amuſements which were adapted to her ſex and and age: ſhe however, determined to quit them all, and go and bury herſelf in an old ruinous chateau, upon the borders of Champagne and Lorraine, and ſituated in a barren

and

and unhealthy ſoil. This old chateau ſhe ornamented, and embelliſhed it with tolerably pretty gardens; I built a gallery, and formed a very good collection of natural hiſtory: add to which, we had a library not badly furniſhed.

We were viſited by ſeveral of the learned, who came to philoſophize in our retreat; among others we had the celebrated Koenig for two entire years, who has ſince died profeſſor at the Hague, and Librarian to her Highneſs the Princeſs of Orange. Maupertuis came alſo, with John Bernouilli; and there it was that Maupertuis, who was born the moſt jealous of all human beings, made

me

me the object of a paſſion which has ever been to him exceedingly dear.

I taught Engliſh to Madame du Châtelet, who, in about three months, underſtood it as well as I did, and read Newton, Locke, and Pope, with equal eaſe. She learnt Italian likewiſe as ſoon. We read all the works of Taſſo and Arioſto together, ſo that when Algarotti came to Cirey, where he finiſhed his *Neutonianiſmo per le Dame*, [The Ladies Newton,] he found her ſufficiently ſkilful in his own language to give him ſome very excellent information by which he profited. Algarotti was a Venetian, the ſon of a very rich tradeſ-

man, and very amiable; he travelled all over Europe, knew a little of every thing, and gave to every thing a grace.

In this our delightful retreat we ſought only inſtruction, and troubled not ourſelves concerning what paſſed in the reſt of the world. We long employed all our attention and powers upon Leibnitz and Newton: Madame du Châtelet attached herſelf firſt to Leibnitz, and explained one part of his ſyſtem, in a book exceedingly well written, entitled *Inſtitutions de Phyſique*. She did not ſeek to decorate philoſophy with ornaments to which philoſophy is a ſtranger; ſuch affectation never was part of her character, which

was

was masculine and just. The properties of her style were clearness, precision, and elegance. If it be ever possible to give the semblance of truth to the ideas of Leibnitz, it will be found in that book: but at present few people trouble themselves to know how or what Leibnitz thought.

Born with a love of truth, she soon abandoned system, and applied herself to the discoveries of the great Newton; she translated his whole book on the principles of the Mathematics into French; and when she had afterwards enlarged her knowledge, she added to this book, which so few people understood, an Algebraical

Com-

Commentary, which likewiſe is not to be underſtood by common readers. M. Clairaut, one of our beſt Geometricians, has carefully reviewed this commentary, an edition of it was begun, and it is not to the honour of the age, that it was never finiſhed.

At Cirey we cultivated all the arts; it was there I compoſed *Alzire*, *Merope*, *l'Enfant*, *Prodigue*, and *Mahomet*. For her uſe I wrote an Eſſay on Univerſal Hiſtory, from the Age of Charlemagne, to the preſent. I choſe the epocha of Charlemagne, becauſe it was the point of time which Boſſuet ſtopped at, and be-

cauſe

cauſe I durſt not again treat a ſubject already handled by ſo great a maſter.

Madame du Châtelet, however, was far from ſatisfied with the Univerſal Hiſtory of this prelate; ſhe thought it eloquent only, and was provoked to find that the labours of Boſſuet were all waſted upon a nation ſo deſpicable as the Jewiſh.

After having ſpent ſix years in this retreat, in the midſt of the arts and ſciences, we were obliged to go to Bruſſels, where the family of du Châtelet had long been embroiled in a law-ſuit with the family of Honſbrouk.

Here

Here I had the good fortune to meet with a grandſon of the illuſtrious and unfortunate Grand Penſioner De Wit, who was firſt Preſident of the Chamber of Accounts, and had one of the fineſt libraries in Europe, which was of great uſe to me in writing my Univerſal Hiſtory.

But I had a ſtill ſuperior happineſs at Bruſſels, and which gave me infinite pleaſure. I terminated the law-ſuit by an accommodation, in which the two families had been ruining each other with expences for near ſixty years, and gained two hundred and twenty thouſand livres paid in ready money to the Marquis du Châtelet.

While

While I remained at Bruſſels, and in the year 1740, the unpoliſhed King of Pruſſia, Frederic-William, the moſt intolerant of all Kings, and beyond contradiction the moſt frugal, and the richeſt in ready money, died at Berlin. His ſon, who has ſince gained ſo ſingular a kind of reputation, had then held a tolerably regular correſpondence with me for above four years. The World never perhaps beheld a father and ſon who leſs reſembled each other than theſe two Monarchs.

The father was an abſolute Vandal, who thought of no other thing during his whole reign, than amaſſing of money, and

and maintaining, at the leaſt poſſible expence, the fineſt ſoldiers in Europe. Never were ſubjects poorer, or King more rich. He bought up at a deſpicable price the eſtates of a great part of the Nobility, who ſoon devoured the little money they got for them, above half of which returned to the royal coffers by means of the duties upon conſumption. All the King's lands were farmed out to tax-gatherers, who held the double office of Exciſeman and Judge; inſomuch, that if a landed tenant did not pay this collector upon the very day appointed, he put on his Judge's robe, and condemned the delinquent in double the ſum. It muſt be obſerved, that

that if this ſame Exciſeman and Judge did not pay the King by the laſt day of the month, the day following he was himſelf obliged to pay double to the King.

Did a man kill a hare or lop a tree any where near the Royal domains, or commit any other Peccadillo; he was inſtantly condemned to pay a fine. Was a poor girl found guilty of *making* a child? the father or the mother, or ſome other of the girl's relations, were obliged to pay his Majeſty *for the faſhion.*

The Baronneſs of Kniphauſſen, who at that time was the richeſt widow in Berlin, that is to ſay, ſhe had between three and four hundred a year, was accuſed of having brought one of the King's ſubjects clandeſtinely into the world in the ſecond year of her widowhood. His Majeſty thereupon wrote her a letter, with his own hand, wherein he informed her it was neceſſary, if ſhe meant to ſave her honour, and preſerve her character, ſhe muſt immediately ſend him thirty thouſand livres (1250l.) This ſum ſhe was obliged to borrow, and was ruined.

He

He had an Ambaſſador at the Hague, whoſe name was Luiſius; and certainly of all the Ambaſſadors that appertained to royalty, he was paid the worſt. This poor man, that he might be able to keep a fire, had cut down ſome trees in the garden of Hous-lardick, which then appertained to the Royal-houſe of Pruſſia. His next diſpatches brought him word that the King, *his gracious Sovereign* had ſtopped on this account a year's ſalary to defray his damages, and Luiſius, in a fit of deſpair, cut his throat with the only razor he had. An old valet, happening to come in, called aſſiſtance, and unhappily for him ſaved his life. I afterwards met with his Excellency at

the

the Hague, and gave him alms at a gate of the Palace, which is called the Old Court, and which belonged to the King of Pruſſia, where this poor Ambaſſador had lived twelve years.

Turkey it muſt be confeſſed is a Republic, when compared to the deſpotiſm exerciſed by this Frederic-William.

It was by ſuch like means, only, that he could in a reign of twenty-eight years load the cellars of his Palace at Berlin with a hundred and twenty millions of crowns (fifteen millions ſterling), all well caſked up in barrels hooped with iron.

He

He took great pleasure in furnishing all the best apartments of the Palace with heavy articles of massy silver, in which the worth of the workman surpassed not the sterling of nature. He gave to the Queen his wife, in charge that is, a cabinet, the contents of which even to the coffee-pot were all gold.

The Monarch used to walk from his Palace cloathed in an old blue coat, with copper buttons, halfway down his thighs, and when he bought a new one, these buttons were made to serve again. It was in this dress that his Majesty, armed with a huge serjeant's cane, marched forth every day to review his regiment

of giants. Theſe giants were his greateſt delight, and the things for which he went to the heavieſt expence.

The men who ſtood in the firſt rank of this regiment were none of them leſs than ſeven feet high, and he ſent to purchaſe them from the farther parts of Europe to the borders of Aſia. I have ſeen ſome of them ſince his death.

The King, his ſon, who loved handſome men, and not gigantic, had given thoſe I ſaw to the Queen, his wife, to ſerve in quality of Heiduques. I remember they accompanied the old ſtate coach, which preceded the Marquis de Beauvau,

Beauvau, who came to compliment the new King in the month of November, 1740. The late King Frederic-William, who had ſold during his life all the magnificent furniture left by his father, never could find a purchaſer for that enormous ungilt coach. The Heiduques, who walked on each ſide to ſupport it in caſe it ſhould fall, ſhook hands with each other over the roof.

After Frederic-William had reviewed his giants, he uſed to walk through the town, and every body fled before him full ſpeed. If he happened to meet a woman, he would demand why ſhe ſtaid idling her time in the ſtreets, and ex-

claim,

claim, *Go—get home with you, you lazy huſſy; an honeſt woman has no buſineſs over the threſhold of her own door*; which remonſtrance he would accompany with a hearty box on the ear, a kick in the groin, or a few well applied ſtrokes on the ſhoulders with his cane.

The holy Miniſters of the Goſpel were treated alſo in exactly the ſame ſtyle, if they happened to take a fancy to come upon the parade.

We may eaſily imagine, what would be the aſtoniſhment and vexation of a Vandal like this, to find he had a ſon endowed with wit, grace, and good breeding;

breeding; who delighted to pleaſe, was eager in the acquiſition of knowledge, and who made verſes, and afterwards ſet them to muſic. If he caught him mith a book in his hand, he threw it in the fire; or playing on the flute, he broke his inſtrument; and ſometimes treated his Royal Highneſs, as he treated the ladies and the preachers when he met with them on the parade.

The Prince, weary of the attentions of ſo kind a father, determined one fine morning, in 1730, to elope, without well knowing whether he would fly to France or England. Paternal oeconomy had deprived him of the power of travelling in

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the ſtyle of ſon and heir to a farmer-general, or even an Engliſh tradeſman, and he was obliged to borrow a few hundred ducats.

Two young gentlemen, both very amiable, one named Kat, the other Keit, were to accompany him. Kat was the only ſon of a brave General Officer, and Keit had married the daughter of the ſame Barronneſs of Kniphauſſen, who had paid the ten thouſand crowns about the child-making buſineſs before mentioned. The day and hour were appointed; the father was informed of the whole affair, and the Prince and his two travelling com-

companions were all three put under an arreſt.

The King believed at firſt, that the Princeſs Wilhelmina, his daughter, who was afterwards married to the Prince Margrave of Bareith, was concerned in the plot: and as he was remarkable for diſpatch in the executive branch of juſtice, he proceeded to kick her out of a large window, which opened from the floor to the ceiling. The Queen-Mother, who was preſent at this exploit, with great difficulty ſaved her, by catching hold of her petticoats at the moment ſhe was making her leap. The Princeſs received a contuſion on her left breaſt,

which

which remained with her during life, as a mark of paternal affection, and which ſhe did me the honour to ſhew me.

The Prince had a ſort of miſtreſs, the daughter of a ſchool-maſter, of the town of Brandebourg, who had ſettled at Potzdam. This girl played tolerably ill upon the harpſicord, and the Prince accompanied her with his flute. He really *imagined* himſelf in love, but in this he was deceived; his avocation was not with the *fair ſex*. However, as he had pretended a kind of paſſion, the king, his father, thought proper that the damſel ſhould make the tour of Potzdam, conducted by the hangman, and ordered her

her to be whipped in presence of his son.

After he had regaled him with this diverting spectacle, he made a transfer of him to the citadel of Custrin, which was situated in the midst of a marsh. Here he was shut up, without a single servant, for the space of six months, in a sort of dungeon, at the end of which time he was allowed a soldier as an attendant.

This soldier, who was young, well made, handsome, and played upon the flute, had more ways than one of amusing the royal prisoner. So many fine qualities have made his fortune; and I have

ſince known him, at the ſame time Valet de Chambre and firſt Miniſter, with all the inſolence which two ſuch poſts may be ſuppoſed to inſpire.

The Prince had been ſome weeks in his Palace at Cuſtrin, when one day an old officer, followed by four grenadiers, immediately entered his chamber, melted in tears. Frederic had no doubt he was going to be made a head ſhorter; but the officer ſtill weeping, ordered the grenadiers to take him to the window, and hold his head out of it, that he might be obliged to look on the execution of his friend Kat, upon a ſcaffold expreſly built there for that purpoſe. He ſaw, ſtretched out his hand,

hand, and fainted. The father was present at this exhibition, as he had been at that of the girl's whipping-bout.

Keit, the other confidant, had escaped and fled into Holland, whither the King dispatched his military messengers to seize him. He escaped merely by a minute, embarked for Portugal, and there remained till the death of the most clement Frederic William.

It was not the King's intention to have stopped there; his design was to have beheaded the Prince. He considered that he had three other sons, not one of whom wrote verses, and that they were sufficient

ſufficient to ſuſtain the Pruſſian grandeur. Meaſures had been already concerted to make him ſuffer, as the Czarovitz, eldeſt ſon to Peter the Great, had done before.

It is not exceedingly clear, from any known laws, human or divine, that a young man ſhould have his head ſtruck off, becauſe he had a wiſh to travel. But his Majeſty had found judges in Pruſſia, equally as learned and equitable as the Ruſſian expounders of law. Beſides that his own paternal authority, in a caſe of need, would at any time ſuffice.

The Emperor Charles the Sixth, however pretended that the Prince Royal,

as a prince of the Empire, could not ſuffer condemnation but in a full diet; and ſent the Count de Sekendorf to the father, in order to make very ſerious remonſtrances on that ſubject.

The Count de Sekendorf, whom I have ſince known in Saxony, where he lives retired, has declared to me, it was with very great difficulty indeed, that he could prevail with the King not to behead the Prince. This is the ſame Sekendorf who has commanded the armies of Bavaria, and of whom the Prince, when he came to the throne, drew a hideous portrait, in the hiſtory of his father, which he inſerted in ſome thirty copies of his Me-

moires de Brandebourg*. Who would not, after this, ſerve Princes, and prevent tyrants from cutting off their heads?

After eighteen months impriſonment, the ſolicitations of the Emperor, and the tears of the Queen, obtained the Prince his liberty; and he immediately began to make verſes, and write muſic more than ever. He read Leibnitz, and even Wolf, whom he called a compiler of traſh, and devoted himſelf to the whole circle of ſciences at once.

* I gave the Elector Palatine the copy of this work, which the King of Pruſſia preſented to me.

As

As the King his father, suffered him to have very little to do with the national affairs, or as there rather indeed were no such affairs in a government, the whole business of which was reviews, he employed his leisure in writing to those men of letters in France, who were something known in the world. These letters were some in verse, and others were treatises of metaphysics, history, and politics. He treated me as a something *divine*, and I him as a *Solomon*. Epithets cost us nothing. They have printed some of these ridiculous things in a collection of my works, and happily they have not printed the thirtieth part of them. I took the liberty to send him

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an exceedingly beautiful ink-ſtand; he had the bounty to preſent me with a few gew-gaws of amber, and all the wits of the Pariſian coffee-houſes imagined with horror my fortune was made.

A young Courlander, named Keizerling, who was likewiſe a rhymer, and of courſe a favourite with Frederic, was diſpatched from the frontiers of Pomerania to us at Cirey. We prepared a feaſt for him, and I made a fine illumination, the lights of which compoſed the cypher, and the name of the Prince Royal, with this device, *l'Eſperance du genre humain:* —The hope of all nations.

For

For my own part, had I been inclined to indulge perſonal hopes, I had great reaſon ſo to do; for my Prince always called me his *dear friend*, in his letters, and ſpoke frequently of the *ſolid* marks of friendſhip which he deſigned for me as ſoon as he ſhould mount the throne.

The throne at laſt was mounted, while I was at Bruſſels, and he began his reign by ſending an Ambaſſador Extraordinary to France; one Camas, who had loſt an arm, formerly a French refugee, and then an officer in the Pruſſian army. He ſaid that, as there was a Miniſter from the French court at Berlin, who had but one hand, he, that he might acquit

quit himſelf of all obligation towards the Moſt Chriſtian King, had ſent him an Ambaſſador with only one arm.

Camas, as ſoon as he arrived ſafe at his inn, diſpatched a lad to me, whom he had created his page, to tell me that he was too much fatigued to come to my houſe, and therefore begged I would come to him inſtantly, he having the fineſt, greateſt, and moſt magnificent preſent that ever was preſented, to make me on the part of the King his maſter. Run—run as faſt as you can, ſaid Madame du Châtelet, he has aſſuredly ſent you the diamonds of the crown.

Away

Away I ran, and found my Ambaſſador, whoſe only baggage was a ſmall keg of wine, tied behind his chaiſe, ſent from the cellar of the late king by the reigning Monarch, with a royal command for me to drink. I emptied myſelf in proteſtations of aſtoniſhment and gratitude for theſe *liquid* marks of his Majeſty's bounty, inſtead of the *ſolid* ones I had been taught to expect, and divided my keg with Camas.

My *Solomon* was then at Straſbourg; the whim had taken him while he was viſiting his long and narrow land, which extends from Guelders to the Baltic ocean, that he would come *incognito* to view

view the frontiers and troops of France. This pleasure he enjoyed at Strasbourg, where he went by the name of count du Four, a Lord of Bohemia. His brother, the Prince Royal, who was with him, had also his travelling title; and Algaroti, who already had attached himself to him, was the only one who went unmasked.

His majesty sent me a history of his journey to Brussels, half verse, half prose, written in a taste something similar to that of Bachaumont and la Chapelle; that is to say, as similar as a King of Prussia's could be supposed to be. The following are extracts from his letter.

" After

" After theſe abominable roads, we " were obliged to put up at ſtill more " abominable inns.

" Hungry and cold, and late at night,
" Each thieviſh hoſt beheld our plight;
" And each, with more than frugal fiſt,
" (Stew'd firſt in moſt infernal miſt)
" Would poiſon us, and after rob us,
" Happy to think how they could fob us.
" Oh times! when robbing is ſo common!
" Oh age! how wide from age of Roman!

" Roads frightful, food bad, drink " worſe. This was not all; we met " with many accidents; and to be ſure " our equipage muſt have ſomething " very odd about it, for every place we

" paſſed through they took us for out-
" landiſh animals.

" One ſtares, and Monarchs us believes,
" Others ſuſpect we're civil thieves;
" Some think us late let looſe from college,
" And eager all of farther knowledge,
" They croud and ſquint, and wiſh to ſmoke us,
" As cockneys gape at hocus-pocus.

" The maſter of the poſt-houſe at Kell
" having aſſured us there was no ſafety
" without paſſports, and ſeeing we were
" drove to an abſolute neceſſity of mak-
" ing them for ourſelves, or of not en-
" tering Straſbourg, we were e'en forced
" to this ſhift, in the execution of which,
" the Pruſſian arms, which I had upon
" my ſeal, were marvellouſly uſeful.

" We

"We arrived at Strasbourg, and the "*Corsaire de la douane* and the *Visiteur* "seemed satisfied with our proofs.

"The rascals found themselves in clover,
"With one eye read our passports over,
"And fix'd the other on our purse,
"Determin'd we should reimburse
"Their pains, with guineas good and many;
"Thus gold, with which Jove bought Miss Danaë,
"Thus gold, with which your mighty Cæsar
"Govern'd the world with wondrous ease, Sir;
"Gold, greater far than all the noddies,
"Ycleped or either God or Goddess,
"Soon brought the scoundrels to adore us,
"And ope the gates of Strasbourg for us *."

We

* Perhaps it is impossible to render the true spirit of these *extracts*, and others inserted in these Memoirs, with-

ou

We may ſee by this letter, that he was not yet become the beſt of all poſſible poets, and that his philoſophy did not look with total indifference on the metal of which his father had made ſuch ample proviſion.

From Straſbourg he went to viſit his territories in the Lower Germany, and ſent me word he would come *incognito* to ſee me at Bruſſels. We prepared elegant apartments for him in the little Chateau de Meuſe, two leagues from Cleves. He informed me, he expected I ſhould

out appearing either ſtupid or extravagant; though liberties have been taken in the ſtyle, which would ſcarcely be juſtifiable in other parts of the work. T.

I ſhould make the firſt advances, and accordingly I went to pay him my moſt profound reſpects.

Maupertuis, who had already formed his plan, having the mania of becoming Preſident of an Academy upon him, had preſented himſelf, and was lodged with Algarotti and Keizerling in one of the garrets in the palace. One ſoldier was the only guard I found. The Privy-Counſellor and Miniſter of State, Rambonet, was walking in the court-yard, blowing his fingers. He had on a pair of large, dirty, coarſe ruffles, a hat all in holes, and an old judge's wig, one ſide of which hung into his pocket, and the other

ſcarcely touched his ſhoulder. They informed me, that this man was charged with a ſtate affair of great importance, and ſo indeed he was.

I was conducted into his Majeſty's apartment, in which I found nothing but four bare walls. By the light of a bougie, I perceived a ſmall truckle bed, of two feet and a half wide, in a cloſet, upon which lay a little man, wrapped up in a morning gown of blue cloth. It was his Majeſty, who lay ſweating and ſhaking, beneath a beggarly coverlet, in a violent ague fit. I made my bow, and began my acquaintance by feeling his pulſe, as if I had been his firſt phyſician.

The

The fit left him, and he rose, dressed himself, and sat down to table with Algaroti, Keizerling, Maupertuis, the Ambassador to the States-General, and myself. While we were at supper, we treated most profoundly on the immortality of the soul, natural liberty, and the *Androgines* of Plato.

While we were thus philosophizing upon freedom, the Privy-Counsellor Rambonet, was mounted upon a post horse, and riding all night towards Liege, at the gates of which he arrived the next day, where he proclaimed, with sound of trumpet, the name of the King his master, while two thousand soldiers from Ve-

ſel was laying the city of Liege under contribution. The pretext for this pretty expedition was certain rights, which his Majeſty pretended to have over the ſuburbs. It was to me he committed the taſk of drawing up the manifeſto, which I performed as well as the nature of the caſe would let me; never ſuſpecting that a King, with whom I ſupped, and who called me his friend, could poſſibly be in the wrong. The affair was ſoon brought to a concluſion, by the payment of a million of livres, which he exacted in good hard ducats, and which ſerved to defray the expences of his tour to Straſbourg, concerning which he complained ſo loudly in his poetic proſe epiſtle.

I ſoon

I ſoon felt my ſelf attached to him, for he had wit, an agreeable manner, and was moreover, a King; which is a circumſtance of ſeduction hardly to be vanquiſhed by human weakneſs. Generally ſpeaking, it is the employment of men of letters to flatter Kings; but in this inſtance, I was praiſed by a King, from the crown of my head to the ſole of my foot, at the ſame time that I was libelled, at leaſt once a week, by the Abbe Des Fontaines, and other Grub-ſtreet poets of Paris.

Some time before the death of his father, the King of Pruſſia thought proper to write againſt the principles of Machiavel.

Machiavel. Had Machiavel had a Prince for a pupil, the very firſt thing he would have adviſed him to do, would have been ſo to write. The Prince Royal, however, was not maſter of ſo much fineſſe; he really meant what he writ; but it was before he was a King, and while his father gave him no great reaſon to fall in love with deſpotic power. He praiſed moderation with his whole ſoul; and in the ardour of his enthuſiaſm, looked upon all uſurpation as abſolute injuſtice.

This manuſcript he had ſent to me at Bruſſels, to have it corrected and printed; and I had already made a preſent of it to a Dutch bookſeller, one Venduren, one

of

of the greateſt knaves of his profeſſion. I could not help feeling ſome remorſe, at being concerned in printing this Anti-Machiavelian book, at the very moment the King of Pruſſia, who had a hundred millions in his coffers, was robbing the poor people at Liege of another, by the hands of the Privy-Counſellor Rambonet.

I imagined my Solomon would not ſtop there. His father had left him ſixty-ſix thouſand four hundred men, all complete, and excellent troops. He was buſily augmenting them, and appeared to have a vaſt inclination to give them employment the very firſt opportunity.

I re-

I repreſented to him, that perhaps it was not altogether prudent to print his book juſt at the time the world might reproach him with having violated the principles he taught; and he permitted me to ſtop the impreſſion. I accordingly took a journey into Holland, purpoſely to do him this trifling ſervice; but the bookſeller demanded ſo much money, that his Majeſty, who was not, in the bottom of his heart, vexed to ſee himſelf in print, was better pleaſed to be ſo for nothing, than to pay for not being ſo.

While I was in Holland, occupied in this buſineſs, Charles the Sixth died, in the month of October, 1740, of an indigeſtion;

digeſtion, occaſioned by eating champignons, which brought on an apoplexy, and this plate of champignons changed the deſtiny of Europe. It was preſently evident, that Frederic the third, King of Pruſſia, was not ſo great an enemy to Machiavel as the Prince Royal appeared to have been.

Although he had then conceived the project of his invaſion of Sileſia, he did not the leſs neglect to invite me to his court; but I had before given him to underſtand I could not come to ſtay with him; that I deemed it a duty to prefer friendſhip to ambition; that I was attached to Madame du Châtelet; and

that, between philoſophers, I loved a lady better than a King. He approved of the liberty I took, though for his own part he did not love the ladies. I went to pay him a viſit in October; and the Cardinal de Fleury writ me a long letter, full of praiſes of the Anti-Machiavel, and of the author, which I did not forget to let him ſee.

He had already aſſembled his troops, yet not one of his Generals or Miniſters could penetrate into his deſigns. The Marquis de Beauvau, who was ſent to complement him on his acceſſion, believed he meant to declare againſt France, in favour of Maria-Thereſa, Queen of

Hungary

Hungary and Bohemia, and daughter of Charles the Sixth; and to ſupport the election of Francis of Lorraine, Grand Duke of Tuſcany, and huſband of that Queen, to the empire, ſuppoſing he might thence derive great advantages.

I had more reaſon than any perſon to ſuppoſe, the new-crowned King of Pruſſia meant to eſpouſe this party; for three months before, he had ſent me a political diſſertation after his manner, wherein he conſidered France as the natural enemy and depredator of Germany. But it was conſtitutional with him to do the direct contrary of what he ſaid or writ; not from diſſimulation, but becauſe he ſpoke

and

and writ with one kind of enthuſiaſm, and afterwards acted with another.

He departed on the 15th of December, with the quartan ague, for the conqueſt of Sileſia, at the head of thirty thouſand combatants, well diſciplined, and well accoutred. As he mounted his horſe, he ſaid to the Marquis de Beauvau, Maria Thereſa's Miniſter, "I am going to play your game; ſhould the trumps fall into your hands, we will divide the winnings."

He has ſince that written the hiſtory of that conqueſt, and he ſhewed me the whole of it. Here follows one of the

curious

curious paragraphs, in the introduction to these annals, which I, in preference, carefully transcribed, as a thing unique in its kind.

"Add to the foregoing considera-
"tions, I had troops entirely prepared
"to act; this, the fulness of my trea-
"sury, and the vivacity of my charac-
"ter, were the reasons why I made war
"upon Maria-Theresa, Queen of Bo-
"hemia and Hungary."

And a few lines after, he has these very words,

"Ambition, interest, and a desire to
"make the world speak of me, van-

" quiſhed all, and war was determined
" on."

From the time that the conquerors, or fiery ſpirits that would be conquerors, firſt were, to the preſent hour, I believe he is the only one who has ever done himſelf thus much juſtice. Never man, perhaps, felt reaſon more forcibly, or liſtened more attentively to his paſſions; but this mixture of a philoſophic mind, and a diſorderly imagination, have ever compoſed his character.

It is much to be regretted that I prevailed on him to omit theſe paſſages, when I afterwards corrected his works; a con-

a confeſſion ſo uncommon, ſhould have paſſed down to poſterity, and have ſerved to ſhew upon what motives the generality of wars are founded. We authors, poets, hiſtorians, and academician declaimers, celebrate theſe fine exploits; but here is a monarch who performs and condemns them.

His troops had already over-run Sileſia, when his Miniſter at Vienna, the Baron de Gotter, made the very impolite propoſal to Maria-Thereſa, of ceding, with a good grace, to the Elector and King his maſter, three-fourths of that province: for which his Pruſſian Majeſty would

would lend her three millions of crowns, and make her husband Emperor.

Maria-Theresa, who at that time had neither troops, money, nor credit, was notwithstanding inflexible; she rather chose to risk the loss of all, than crouch to a Prince whom she looked upon as the vassal of her ancestors, and whose life the Emperor, her father, had saved. Her Generals could scarcely muster twenty thousand men. Marshal Neuperg, who commanded them, forced the King of Prussia to give battle under the walls of Neisse. The Prussian cavalry was at first put to the rout by the Austrian;

and

and the King, who was not accuſtomed to ſtand fire, fled at the firſt ſhock as far as Opeleim, twelve long leagues from the field of battle.

Maupertuis, who hoped to make his fortune in a hurry, was in the ſuit of the Monarch this compaign, imagining that the King would at leaſt find him a horſe. But this was not the royal cuſtom. Maupertuis bought an aſs for two ducats, on the day of battle, and fled with all his might after his Majeſty on aſs-back. This ſteed, however, was preſently diſtanced, and Maupertuis was taken and ſtripped by the Auſtrian huſſars.

Frederic

Frederic paſſed the night on a truckle-bed, in a village alehouſe near Ratibor, on the confines of Poland, whence he was preparing to enter the northern part of his own dominions, when one of his horſemen arrived from the camp at Molwitz, and informed him he had gained the victory. This news was confirmed a quarter of an hour after by an Aid-de-Camp, and was true enough.

If the Pruſſian cavalry was bad, the infantry was the beſt in Europe; it had been under the diſcipline of the old Prince of Anhalt for thirty years. Marſhal Schwerin, who commanded, was a pupil of Charles the Twelfth. He turned the

the fate of the day as ſoon as the King was fled. The next day his Majeſty came back to his army, and the conquering General was very near being diſgraced.

I returned to philoſophize in my retreat at Cirey, and paſſed the winter at Paris, where I had a multitude of enemies; for, having long before written the Hiſtory of Charles XII. preſented ſeveral ſucceſsful pieces to the theatre, and compoſed an epic poem, I had, of courſe, all thoſe who either writ in verſe or proſe as perſecutors; and as I had the audacity to write likewiſe on philoſophic ſubjects, I of neceſſity was treated as an

atheiſt

atheiſt by all thoſe who are called devotees, according to the ancient uſage.

I was the firſt who had dared develop to my countrymen, in an intelligible ſtyle, the diſcoveries of the great Newton. The Carteſian prejudices, which had taken place of the prejudices of the Peripatetics, were at that time ſo rooted in the minds of the French, that the Chancellor d'Agueſſeau regarded any man whatever who ſhould adopt diſcoveries made in England, as an enemy to reaſon and the ſtate. He never would grant a privilege that I might have my *Elements of the Newtonian Philoſophy* printed.

I was

I was likewiſe a vaſt admirer of Locke; I conſidered him as the ſole reaſonable Metaphyſician. Above all, I praiſed that moderation ſo new, ſo prudent, and at the ſame time ſo daring, where he ſays, we have not ſufficient knowledge to determine or affirm, by the light of reaſon, that God could not grant the gifts of thought and ſenſation to a being which we call Material.

The obſtinate malignity and intrepidity of ignorance, with which they ſet upon me on this article, cannot be conceived. The principles of Locke had never occaſioned any diſputes in France before, becauſe the Doctors read St.

Thomas Aquinas, and the reſt of the world read Romances. As ſoon as I had praiſed this Author, they began to cry out againſt both him and me. The poor creatures, who were hotteſt in this diſpute, certainly knew very little of either matter or ſpirit. The fact is, we none of us know what or how we are, except that we are convinced we have motion, life, ſenſation, and thought, but without having the leaſt conception of how we came by them. The very elements of matter are as much hidden from us as the reſt. We are blind creatures, that walk on, groping and reaſoning in the dark; and Locke was exceedingly right when he aſſerted, it was not

for us to determine what the Almighty could or could not do.

All this, added to the ſucceſs of my theatrical productions, drew a whole library of pamphlets down upon me, in which they proved I was a bad Poet, an Atheiſt, and the ſon of a Peaſant.

A hiſtory of my life was printed, in which this genealogy was inſerted—An induſtrious German took care to collect all the tales of that kind, which had been crammed into the libels they had publiſhed againſt me. They imputed adventures to me with perſons I never knew, and with others that never exiſted.

I have

I have found while writing this, a letter from the Marſhal de Richelieu, which informed me of an impudent Lampoon, in which it was proved his wife had given me an elegant coach, with *ſomething elſe*, at a time when he had no wife.

At firſt I took ſome pleaſure in making a collection of theſe calumnies, but they multiplied to ſuch a degree I was obliged to leave off. Such were the fruits I gathered from my labours: I, however, eaſily conſoled myſelf; ſometimes in my retreat at Cirey, and at others in mixing with the beſt company.

While the refuſe of literature were thus making war upon me, France was

doing

doing the ſame upon the Queen of Hungary; and it muſt be owned, this war was equally unjuſt; for after having ſolemnly ſtipulated, guaranteed, and ſwore to the Pragmatic Sanction of the Emperor Charles VI. and the ſucceſſion of Maria-Thereſa to the inheritance of her father, and after having received Lorraine as the purchaſe of theſe promiſes, it does not appear very conſiſtent with the rights of nations to break an engagement ſo ſacred. The Cardinal de Fleury was perſuaded out of his pacific meaſures; he could not ſay, like the King of Pruſſia, it was the vivacity of his temper which occaſioned him to take arms. This fortunate Prelate reigned when he

was eighty-ſix years of age, but held the reins of government with a very feeble hand.

France was in alliance with the King of Pruſſia, when he ſeized upon Sileſia; and had ſent two armies into Germany at a time when Maria-Thereſa had none. One of theſe armies had penetrated to within five leagues of Vienna, without meeting a ſingle opponent; Bohemia was given to the Elector of Bavaria, who was elected Emperor alſo, after having been created Lieutenant-General of the armies of the King of France. They ſoon, however, committed all the faults

neceſſary

necessary to lose the advantages they had gained.

The King of Prussia, in the mean time, having matured his courage, and gained several victories, concluded a Peace with the Austrians. Maria, to her infinite regret, gave him up the county of Glatz with Silesia. Having, without ceremony, broke off his alliance with France on these conditions, in the month of June, 1742, he writ me word he had put himself under a proper regimen, and should advise the other invalids to do the like.

This Prince was then at the height of his power, having one hundred and

thirty

thirty thouſand men under his command uſed to victory, and the cavalry of which he himſelf had formed. He drew twice as much from Sileſia as it produced to the Houſe of Auſtria, ſaw himſelf firmly ſeated in his new conqueſt, and was happy, while all the other contending powers were ſuffering the miſeries of depredation. Princes in theſe times ruin themſelves by war—he enriched himſelf.

He now turned his attention to the embelliſhment of the city of Berlin, where he built one of the fineſt opera-houſes in Europe, and whither he invited artiſts of all denominations. He wiſhed

wiſhed to acquire glory of every kind, and to acquire it in the cheapeſt manner poſſible.

His father had reſided at Potzdam in a vile old houſe; he turned it into a palace. Potzdam became a pleaſant town; Berlin grew daily more extenſive; and the Pruſſians began to taſte the comforts of life, which the late King had entirely neglected. Several people had furniture in their houſes, and ſome even wore ſhirts, for in the former reign ſuch things were little known; they wore ſleeves and fore-bodies only, tied on with pack-thread, and the reigning Monarch had been ſo educated.

The

The ſcene changed as it were by magic; Lacedæmon became Athens; deſerts were peopled; and one hundred and three villages were formed from marſhes cleared and drained. Nor did he neglect to make verſes, and write muſic: I therefore was not ſo exceedingly wrong in calling him, The Solomon of the North. I gave him this nick name in my Letters, and he continued long to bear it.

MEMOIRS

OF

VOLTAIRE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE SECOND.

CARDINAL de Fleury died the twenty-ninth of February, 1743, at the age of ninety. Never did man come to be Prime-Minister later in life, and never did Prime-Minister keep his place so long. He began his career of good fortune at the age of seventy-three,

by being King of France; and so he continued indisputably to the day of his death, always affecting the greatest modesty, never amassing riches, and without pomp, forming himself only to reign. He left the reputation of an artful and amiable person, rather than that of a man of genius, and was said to have known the intrigues of a court, better than the affairs of Europe.

I have often seen him at the house of Madame de Villeroi, when he was only the ancient Bishop of the little paltry town of Frejus, of which he was always called Bishop *by divine indignation*, as may be seen in some of his letters.

Madame

Madame de Villeroi was an exceedingly ugly woman, whom he *repudiated* as soon as ever it was convenient. The marshal de Villeroi, her husband, who knew not the Bishop had long been the lover of his lady, prevailed on Louis XIV. to name him Preceptor to Louis XV. From Preceptor he became Prime-Minister, and was not backward in contributing to the exile of his benefactor. Ingratitude excepted, he was a tolerably good man; but, as he had no talents himself, he took care to drive away all those who had, be they of what kind they would.

Several of the Academicians were desirous I should supply his place in the

French Academy. It was aſked at the King's ſupper, who ſhould pronounce the Cardinal's funeral oration at the Academy? His Majeſty replied, it ſhould be me; the Dutcheſs of Chateauroux, his Miſtreſs, would have it ſo; but the Count de Maurepas, Secretary of State, would not. He was bit with a fooliſh rage of quarrelling with all the Miſtreſſes of his Maſter, and found the effects of his diſeaſe.

An old idiot, who was Preceptor to the Dauphin, formerly a Theatine Monk, and afterwards Biſhop of Mirapoix, named Boyer, undertook, for conſcience-ſake, to ſecond the caprice of M.

de

de Maurepas. This Boyer having the diſpoſal of the church livings, the King left all the affairs of the Clergy to his management. This, in his opinion, came under the head of eccleſiaſtical matters; and he remonſtrated that it would be an offence againſt God, ſhould a profane perſon, like me, ſucceed a Cardinal.

I knew that M. de Maurepas inſtigated him to act thus; I therefore went to this Miniſter, and told him, that though the honour of being an Academician was not a very important dignity, yet, after having been appointed, it was a diſagreeable thing to be excluded. You are upon ill terms with the Dutcheſs de

Chateau-

Chateauroux, with whom his Majeſty is in love, and likewiſe with the Duke de Richelieu, by whom ſhe is governed. But pray, my Lord, what connexion is there between theſe diſputes of yours, and a poor ſeat in the French Academy? I conjure you to tell me ſincerely, in caſe Madame de Chateauroux can vanquiſh the Biſhop de Mirepoix in this conteſt, will you remain neuter?—He ſeemed to collect himſelf for a moment, and then replied, "No; I ſhall cruſh "you."

The Prieſt at length conquered the Miſtreſs, and I loſt my ſeat in the Academy, which did not give me much vexation;

ation; but I love to recollect this adventure; it depicts ſo truly the little arts of thoſe whom we call *the Great*, and ſhews how really trifles are often conſidered by them as very important matters.

Public affairs, however, went on no better ſince the death of the Cardinal, than they had done during the two laſt years of his life. The Houſe of Auſtria roſe from its aſhes into new life; France was preſſed hard by England; and we had no reſource left but in the King of Pruſſia, who had led us into this war, and who abandoned us in our neceſſity. They conceived the deſign of

ſending ſecretly to ſound the intentions of this Monarch, and try if he was not in a humour to prevent the ſtorm, which, ſoon or late, muſt gather at Vienna, and fall upon him, after having viſited us; to ſee therefore if he would not lend us a hundred thouſand men on this occaſion, and thus fix himſelf more firmly in the Sileſian conqueſt.

The Duke de Richelieu, and the Dutcheſs de Chateauroux firſt imagined this ſcheme, the King adopted it, and M. Amelot, Miniſter for foreign Affairs, but in a very ſubaltern ſituation, was ſingly charged to haſten my departure. A pretext was wanted, and I

ſeized

ſeized that of my diſpute with the old Biſhop of Mirepoix, which met with his Majeſty's approbation. I writ to the King of Pruſſia, that I could no longer endure the perſecutions of this Theatine Monk; and that I muſt take refuge with a King, who was a philoſopher, to eſcape the ſnare of a Biſhop, who was a bigot. This Prelate always ſigned himſelf *l'anc*, inſtead of *l'ancien*, [the ancient] Biſhop of Mirepoix; and his writing being very bad, we uſed continually to read and call him the aſs of Mirepoix. It was a ſubject of pleaſantry, and never was negociation more gay.

The

The King of Pruſſia who ſtruck not with a palſied hand, when the blow was intended for the cheek of a Monk, or a Prelate become courtier, replied with a deluge of ſarcaſms upon the aſs of Mirepoix, and preſſed me to come.

I took great care, that both my letters and theſe anſwers ſhould be read. It ſoon came to the Biſhop's ears, and he went to complain to his Majeſty, that he was laughed at for a fool in a foreign court.

The King's anſwer was, it was a matter agreed on, and he muſt let it paſs without notice.

This

This anſwer has very little of the character of Louis XV. in it; and, as coming from him, always appeared to me extraordinary. Thus I had at once the pleaſure of revenging myſelf upon a Biſhop, who had excluded me from the academy, of taking a very agreeable journey, and of having an opportunity to exert myſelf in the ſervice of the King and State. Even the Count de Maurepas entered into this project with warmth, becauſe at that time he governed M. Amelot, and conſidered himſelf in fact as the Miniſter for foreign affairs.

The moſt ſingular part of this buſineſs was, that we were obliged to let madame

du

du Châtelet into the ſecret. There was not in her opinion any thing in the world ſo unmanly, ſo abominable, as for a man to leave a woman to go and live with a King; and ſhe would have made a moſt dreadful tumult, had they not agreed, that, to appeaſe her, ſhe ſhould be informed of the reaſon, and that the letters ſhould all paſs through her hands.

Whatever money I wanted for my journey, was given upon my mere receipt by M. de Marmontel, which power I took care not to abuſe. I ſtayed ſome time in Holland, while the King of Pruſſia was galloping from one end of his territories to the other, to be preſent at reviews,

reviews, and my ſtay at the Hague was not uſeleſs. I had apartments in the palace *de la Vieile Cour*, which belonged at that time to the King of Pruſſia, in participation with the Houſe of Orange. His Envoy, the young Count de Padvitz, loved, and was beloved by the lady of one of the principal perſons among their High Mightineſſes, and he obtained from her copies of all their ſecret reſolutions, which at that time were very prejudicial to the intereſts of France. Theſe copies I ſent to our court, and my ſervice was found very acceptable.

When I came to Berlin, his Majeſty would lodge me in the palace as he had

done

done on my former viſits. He led at Potzdam the life he had always led ſince his advancement to the throne: the manner of it deſerves a deſcription.

He roſe at five in ſummer, and ſix in winter. If you wiſh to know the royal ceremonies, what they were on great, and what on common occaſions, the functions of his high Almoner, his great Chamberlain, the firſt Gentleman of his Bed-chamber, and his Gentlemen Uſhers, I anſwer, a ſingle lacquey came to light his fire, dreſs and ſhave him, though he partly dreſſed himſelf alone. His chamber was rather beautiful; a rich baluſtrade of ſilver, ornamented with little loves,

loves, of exceedingly good ſculpture, ſeemed to form the alcove of the ſtate-bed, the curtains of which were ſeen; but behind theſe curtains, inſtead of a bed there was a library; and as to the real bed, it was a kind of folding couch of ſtraw, with a ſlight mattreſs, and hidden from the view. Marcus Aurelius and Julian, the two greateſt men among the Romans, and apoſtles of the Stoics, lay not on a harder bed.

As ſoon as his Majeſty was dreſſed and booted, Stoiciſm for a few moments gave place to Epiciuriſm. Two or three of his favourites entered: theſe were either Lieutenants, Enſigns, Pages, Heiduques,

or young Cadets. Coffee was brought in, and he to whom the handkerchief was thrown, remained ten minutes tête-à-tête with his Majesty. Things were not carried to the last extremity, because while Prince, in his father's life-time, he had been very ill treated, and ill cured, in his amours *de passade**. He could not play principal, and was obliged to content himself with the second.

These school-boy sports being over, the state affairs next were considered, and his first Minister came with a large bundle of papers under his arm. This first Minister was a Clerk, who lodged up

* Of once and away.

two-pair of ſtairs in the houſe of Fudeſdoff, and was the ſoldier, now valet de chambre and favourite, who had formerly ſerved the King at Cuſtrin. The Secretaries of ſtate ſent all the diſpatches to the King's Clerks; they made extracts, which were brought to his Majeſty by this perſon, and the King writ his anſwer in the margin in two words. The whole affairs of the kingdom were thus expedited in an hour, and ſeldom did the Secretaries of ſtate, or the Miniſters in office, come into his preſence; nay, there were ſome, to whom even he had never ſpoken. The King, his father, had put the finances under ſuch exact regulations, all was executed in ſuch a military

manner,

manner, and obedience was ſo blind, that four hundred leagues were governed with as much eaſe as a manor.

About eleven o'clock, the king, booted, reviewed in his garden his regiment of guards; and at the ſame hour all the Colonels did the like throughout the provinces, in the interval of parade and dinner-time. The Princes his brothers, the General officers, and one or two of his Chamberlains, eat at his table, which was as well furniſhed as could be expected in a country where they had neither game, tolerable butcher's meat, nor poultry, and where they got all their wheat from Magdebourg.

When

When dinner was over he retired to his cabinet, and writ verſes till five or ſix o'clock, when a young man of the name of Darget, formerly ſecretary to M. de Valory, the French Envoy, came and read to him. At ſeven he had a little concert, at which he played the flute, and as well as the beſt performers. His own compoſitions were often among the pieces played, for there was no art he did not cultivate; and had he lived among the Greeks, he would not, like Epaminondas, have had the mortification to confeſs he did not underſtand muſic.

They ſupped in a little hall, the moſt ſingular ornament of which was a picture,

the design of which he himself gave to Pene, his painter, and one of our best colourists. The subject was totally Priapian. Turtles billing, young men in the embraces of young women, nymphs beneath satyrs, cupids at lascivious sports, people fainting with desire at beholding them, and rams and goats at similar pastimes. The supper was frequently seasoned with the same kind of philosophy; and any person who had heard the discourse, and looked at this picture, would have supposed they had caught the Seven Sages of Greece in a brothel.

Never was there a place in the world where liberty of speech was so fully indulged,

dulged, or where the various ſuperſtitions of men were treated with ſo great a degree of pleaſantry and contempt. God was reſpected, but thoſe who in his name had impoſed upon credulity, were not ſpared. Neither women nor prieſts ever entered the palace; and, in a word, Frederic lived without religion, without a council, and without a court.

Some of the provincial judges were about to burn a poor devil of a Peaſant, accuſed of an intrigue of a ſhocking nature. No perſon, however, is executed in the Pruſſian dominions, till Frederic has confirmed the ſentence; a moſt humane law, practiſed likewiſe in England,

and

and other countries. The King wrote at the bottom of the ſentence, that free liberty of opinion, and of ******* was allowed throughout his territories.

A Miniſter near Stettin, thought this indulgence exceedingly ſcandalous, and let fall ſome expreſſions in a ſermon upon Herod, which glanced at the King; he was therefore ſummoned to appear before the Conſiſtory at Potzdam, though in fact there was no more a Conſiſtory at Court than there was a Maſs. The poor man came. The King put on a band and ſurplice. M. d'Argens, Author of the Jewiſh Letters, and one Baron de Polnitz, who had changed his religion three

or

or four times, dreſſed themſelves up in the ſame manner. A folio volume of Bayle's Dictionary was placed upon the table by way of a Bible, and the culprit was introduced by two grenadiers, and ſet before theſe three Miniſters of the Goſpel.

My brother, ſaid the King, I demand, in the name of the moſt High God, who the Herod was concerning whom you preached? He who ſlew the Children, replied the ſimple Prieſt. But was this Herod the firſt? ſaid the King; for you ought to know there have been ſeveral Herods. The Prieſt was ſilent; he could not anſwer this queſtion. How! con-

tinued the King, have you dared to preach about Herod, and are ignorant both of him and his family? You are unworthy of the holy miniſtry. We ſhall pardon you for this time, but know we ſhall excommunicate you if ever you dare hereafter preach againſt any one whom you do not know.

They then delivered his ſentence and pardon to him, ſigned by three ridiculous names invented on purpoſe. We ſhall go to-morrow to Berlin, added the King, and we will demand forgiveneſs for you of our brotherhood. Do not fail to come and find us out. Accordingly the Prieſt went, and enquired for theſe three

labourers

labourers in the gospel vineyard all over Berlin, where he was laughed at; but the King, who had more humour than liberality, forgot to reimburse him for the expences of his journey.

Frederic governed the church with as much despotism as the state. He pronounced the divorces himself when husband and wife wanted to pair themselves differently. A minister one day cited the Old Testament on the subject of divorces, and the King told him, Moses managed the Jews just as he pleased; as for me, I must govern my Prussians to the best of my abilities.

This

This ſingularity of government, theſe manners ſtill more ſingular, this contraſt of Stoiciſm and Epicurianiſm, of ſeverity in military diſcipline, and effeminacy in the interior of the Palace, of Pages with whom he amuſed himſelf in his cloſet, and of Soldiers who run the gauntlet ſix and thirty times, while the monarch beheld them through his window, under which the puniſhment was inflicted, of reaſoning on ethics, and of unbridled licentiouſneſs, formed altogether a heterogeneous picture, which till then few had known, and which has ſince ſpread through Europe.

The greateſt œconomy of every kind was obſerved at Potzdam; the King's table, and that of his officers and domeſtics, were regulated at thirty-three crowns (about four guineas) a day, excluſive of wine. Inſtead of the Officers of the crown taking charge of this expence, as at other courts, it was his valet de chambre Frideſdorff, who was at once his High Steward, Great Cup-bearer and Firſt Pantler.

Whether it was from policy or œconomy, I know not; but he never granted the leaſt kindneſs to any of his former favourites, eſpecially to thoſe who had riſked their lives for him when he was

Prince Royal. He did not even pay the money he borrowed at that time. Like as Louis XII. would not revenge the affronts of the Duke d'Orleans, neither would the King of Prussia remember the debts of the Prince Royal.

His poor mistress, who had suffered whipping for his sake by the hands of the common hangman, was married at Berlin to the Clerk of the Hackney-Coach-Office, for they had eighteen hackney coaches at Berlin; and her royal lover allowed her a pension of seventy crowns (eight pounds fifteen shillings) a year. She called herself Mademoiselle Saumers, and was a tall,

meagre

meagre figure, very like one of the Sybils, without the leaſt appearance of meriting to be publicly whipped for a Prince.

When, however, he was at Berlin, he made a great diſplay of magnificence on public days. It was a ſuperb ſpectacle for the vain, that is to ſay, for almoſt all mankind, to ſee him at table, ſurrounded with twenty Princes of the Empire, ſerved in veſſels of gold, the richeſt in Europe, by two and thirty Pages, and as many young Heiduques, all ſplendidly cloathed, and bearing diſhes of maſſy gold. The State Officers

were

were alſo employed on theſe occaſions, though unknown at any other time.

After dinner they went to the Opera at the large Theatre, three hundred feet long; which had been built without an Architect by one of his Chamberlains, whoſe name was Knoberſtoff. The fineſt voices and beſt dancers were engaged in his ſervice. Barberini at that time danced at his Theatre, the ſame who has ſince been married to the ſon of his Chancellor. The King had her carried off by his ſoldiers from Venice, and brought even through Vienna as far as Berlin. He was a little in love with her, becauſe

ſhe

She had legs like a man; but the thing moſt of all incomprehenſible, was, that he gave her a ſalary of thirty-two thouſand livres (above thirteen hundred pounds.) His Italian Poet, who was obliged to put the operas into verſe, of, which the King himſelf gave the plan had little more than a thirtieth part of this ſum; but it ought to be remembered, he was very ugly, and could not dance. In a word, Barberini touched for her ſhare more than any three of his Miniſters of State together.

As for the Italian Poet, he one day took care to pay himſelf with his own hands, for he ſtript off the gold from the

ornaments in an old chapel of the first King of Prussia's; on which occasion Frederic remarked, that as he never went to the chapel he had lost nothing. Besides, he had lately written a dissertation in favour of thieves, which is printed in the collections of his academy; and he did not think proper this time to contradict his writings by his actions.

This indulgence was not extended to any military being. There was an old gentleman of Franche-Comté, confined in the prison of Spandau, who was six feet high, and whom the late King for that reason had inveigled into Prussia. They promised him the place of Chamberlain,

berlain, and gave him that of foot ſoldier. This poor man ſoon after deſerted with one of his comrades, but was taken and brought before the late King. He had the ſimplicity to tell him, he repented of nothing but that he had not ſtabbed ſuch a tyrant; and for this anſwer he had his noſe and ears cut off, ran the gauntlet ſix and thirty times, and was afterwards ſent to wheel the barrow at Spandau. He continued this employment to the very time that M. de Valory, our Envoy, preſſed me to beg remiſſion for him of the moſt *clement* ſon of the moſt iron-hearted Frederic-William.

His

His Majesty had been pleased to say, it was to oblige me that he had got up an Opera full of poetical beauties, and written by the celebrated Metastasio, called, *La Clemenza di Tito*. The King, with the assistance of his composer, had set it to music himself. I took this opportunity to recommend the poor old Frenchman without nose and ears, to his bounty, which I did in the following admonitory verses.

What! can it be when mighty Frederic reigns
That wretches groan? Oh! Genius universal,
Soul firm, yet feeling, deign to end the culprit's
Torments; cease not your generous cares for misery:

Lo! at your feet, where Pity, daughter of
Repentance, mistress of great minds, kneels trembling,
Astonished to find her tears shed in vain,
On the hand that has driven Sorrow from the Earth.
Wherefore display with such magnificence
The triumphs of great Titus? Imitate
Him every way, or vaunt of him no more.

The request was something daring, but one may say what one will poetically. His Majesty promised remission, and some months after even had the bounty to send the poor gentleman in question to the Hospital, at three pence a day, which favour he had refused to the Queen his mother; but she, in all probability,

probability, had aſked only in proſe.

In the midſt of all theſe feaſts, operas, and ſuppers, my ſecret negociation went forward; the King was willing I ſhould ſpeak on every thing, and I frequently took occaſion to intermix queſtions concerning France and Auſtria with the Eneid and Roman Hiſtory. The converſation was ſometimes animated; the King became warm, and would tell me, that while our Court was knocking at every door to procure peace, he ſhould not think it adviſeable to go to war in our defence. I ſent my reflexions upon paper, left half blank, from my apart-

ment

ment to his: and he anſwered my daring remarks in the margin. I have this paper ſtill, in which I have ſaid,

Can it be doubted that the Houſe of Auſtria will ſeize the very firſt opportunity, to redemand Sileſia? To which he anſwered in the margin,

Ils ſeront reçûs, biribi,
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami.

Then they received, my friend, ſhall be
After the mode of Barbary.

This new kind of negociation finiſhed by a diſcourſe, which in one of his moments

moments of vivacity, he made me againſt the King of England, his dear Uncle. Theſe two Kings did not love one another. My Pruſſian Monarch told me, "George was the Uncle of Frederic, but not of the King of Pruſſia;" and he ended by ſaying, "Let France declare war againſt England, and I will march."

This was all I wanted. I returned inſtantly to France, and gave an account of my journey; with ſuch hopes to the French Miniſtry as had been given me at Berlin. Neither were they falſe, for the ſpring following the King of Pruſſia concluded a new treaty with France, and advanced into Bohemia with a hundred

thouſand

thousand men while the Austrians were in Alsatia.

Had I related my adventure to any good Parisian, with the service I had done the state, he would not have made the least doubt of my having been promised a good place. I will tell you what was my recompence. The Dutchess de Chateauroux was vexed the negociation had not been brought about entirely by her means; she had likewise an inclination to have M. Amelot turned out because he stuttered, which trifling defect she found offensive, and she farther hated him because he was governed by M. de Maurepas; he was accordingly

diſmiſſed eight days after, and I was included in his diſgrace.

It happened ſome time after this, that Louis XV. fell extremely ill at the city of Metz. This was the time for M. de Maurepas and his cabal to ruin the Dutcheſs de Chateauroux. The Biſhop of Soiſſons, Fitz-James, ſon of the baſtard of James II. who was thought a ſaint, would, in quality of Grand Almoner, convert the King; and declared he would neither grant him abſolution, nor ſuffer him to communicate, if he did not drive away his Miſtreſs, with her ſiſter the Dutcheſs of Lauragais, and their friends; and the two ſiſters in conſequence de-

parted,

parted with the execrations of the people of Metz.

This action of Louis XV. was the occaſion that the Pariſians, equally ſtupid with the good folks of Metz, gave him the ſurname of BIEN-AIME, *Well-beloved.* A fellow named Vadé firſt invented this title, which all the Almanacs echoed. As ſoon as the Prince recovered, he deſired only to be the well-beloved of his Miſtreſs, for whom he found his affection increaſe; and ſhe was again going to undertake her Miniſtry, when ſhe died ſuddenly, in conſequence of the paſſions into which ſhe had been

thrown

thrown by her dismission. She was presently forgot.

A Mistress was now wanted, and the choice fell upon the Demoiselle Poisson. She was the daughter of a kept woman and a countryman, who lived at La Ferte-sous-Jouare, and who had amassed some money by selling wheat to the corn-factors. This poor man at that time had absconded, having been condemned for malversation, and they had married his daughter to the under Farmer general le Normand, Lord of Etiole, and Nephew of the Farmer-general le Normand, of Tournehem, who kept her mother. The daughter had been well educated, was prudent, amiable,

miable, very graceful, had great talents, a fine underſtanding, and a good heart.

I was tolerably intimate with her, and was even the confidant of her amours. She confeſſed to me, ſhe had always had a ſecret fore-thought that the King would fall in love with her, and that ſhe had always ardently wiſhed he might, without making her wiſhes too apparent. This idea, which ſeems ſo chimerical for a perſon in her ſtation, originated from her having been often taken to the royal hunt in the foreſt of Senar. Tourneham her mother's lover, had a country-houſe near there, and uſed to take her out to air in a neat Calaſh. His Ma-

jesty had observed her, and had often sent her venison. Her mother never ceased telling her she was handsomer than Madame de Chateauroux, and the good man Tourneham confirmed it in raptures. It must be owned, the daughter of Madame Poisson, was a morsel for Majesty. After she was certain of her Royal Lover, she told me she was firmly persuaded of the doctrine of predestination, and she had some cause so to be. I passed several months with her at Etiole, while the King made the campaign of 1746.

I hence obtained rewards which had never been granted to my works or my services.

ſervices. I was deemed worthy to be one of the forty *uſeleſs* Members of the Academy, was appointed Hiſtoriographer of France, and created by the King one of the Gentlemen in ordinary of his Chamber. From this I concluded it was better, in order to make the moſt trifling fortune, to ſpeak four words to a King's miſtreſs, than to write a hundred volumes.

As ſoon as I had the appearance of a fortunate man, the whole brotherhood of the Beaux-Eſprits of Paris was let looſe upon me, with all the inveterate animoſity which might be expected from them

them againſt a perſon who gained every recompenſe he was entitled to by his merit.

My connexion with Madame du Châtelet was never interrupted; our friendſhip and our love of literature, were unalterable; we lived together both in town and out of town. Cirey is ſituated upon the borders of Lorraine, and King Staniſlaus at that time kept his little agreeable court at Luneville. Old and fanatic as he was, he yet had a friendſhip with a lady who was neither. His ſoul was divided between Madame la Marquiſe de Boufflers, and a Jeſuit, whoſe name was Menou; a Prieſt, the moſt

daring

daring and full of intrigue I have ever known.

This man had drawn from King Staniſlaus, by means of his Queen, whom he had governed, about a million of livres, near forty-two thouſand pounds, part of which were employed in building a magnificent houſe for himſelf and ſome Jeſuits of Nancy. This houſe was endowed with twenty-four thouſand livres, or a thouſand pounds a year, half of which ſupplied his table, and the other half was to give away to whom he pleaſed. The King's miſtreſs * was not by

* Omit the word Miſtreſs, it is falſe, and inſert Friend. The Marchioneſs de Boufflers was a moſt

diſintereſted

by any means ſo well treated; ſhe ſcarcely could get enough from his Poliſh Majeſty to buy her petticoats, and yet the Jeſuit envied what ſhe had, and was violently jealous of her power. They were at open war*, and the poor King had

diſintereſted friend, and ſeldom uſed her intereſt but in the ſervice of her friends; and the expreſſion, *enough to buy her petticoats*, is not at all applicable.

* Madame de Boufflers never was at variance with Father Menou, who, all-intriguing as he was, never thought of giving Staniſlaus Madame du Châtelet for a miſtreſs. That lady, and M. de Voltaire, never were at Luneville, except when invited by Me de B***, whom they often viſited, and found very amiable;

had enough to do every day when he came from mafs, to reconcile his miftrefs and his confeffor. Our Jefuit at laft having heard of Madame du Châtelet, who was exceedingly well fhaped, and ftill tolerably handfome, conceived the project of fubftituting her to Madame de Boufflers.

Staniflaus amufed himfelf fometimes in writing little works, which were bad

able; they never went as to the King of Poland. If Menou really propofed the journey to Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet, it was when he was informed they were coming, and to make a merit of it with the King.

The two laft notes are by M. de St. Lambert, author of a Poem on the Seafons.

enough,

enough, and Menou imagined an authoresſ would ſucceed with him as a miſtreſs better than any other. With this fine trick in his head he came to Cirey, cajoled Madame du Châtelet, and told us how delighted King Staniſlaus would be in our company. He then returned to the King, and informed him how ardently we deſired to come and pay our court to his Majeſty. Staniſlaus aſked Madame de Boufleurs to bring us; and we went to paſs the whole year, 1749, at Luneville. But the projects of the holy Jeſuit did not ſucceed; the very reverſe took place; we were devoted to Madame de Boufflers, and he

had

had two woman to combat instead of one.

The life led at the court of Lorraine was tolerably agreeable; though there, as in other courts, there were plenty of intrigues and artifice.

Towards the end of the year, Poncet, Bishop of Troyes, who was overwhelmed with debts, and whose reputation was lost, wished to come and augment our intrigues and artifice.

When I say he had lost his reputation, I mean also the reputation of his sermons and funeral orations. He obtained.

tained, through the intereſt of our two ladies, the place of Grand-Almoner to the King, who was flattered by having a Biſhop in his pay, and at very ſmall wages too. This Prelate did not come till 1750: he began his career by intriguing againſt Madame de Boufflers, his benefactreſs, and was diſmiſſed. His anger alighted on Louis XV. the ſon-in-law of Staniſlaus; being returned to Troyes, he would needs play a part in the ridiculous farce of the confeſſional billets, invented by Beaumont, Archbiſhop of Paris: he made head againſt the parliament, and braved the King. This was not the way to pay his debts, but to get himſelf impriſoned.

Louis

Louis ſent him into Alſatia, and had him ſhut up in a convent of fat German Friars.

But I muſt return to what concerns myſelf. Madame du Châtelet died in the palace of Staniſlaus, after two days illneſs; and we were ſo affected, that not one of us ever remembered to ſend for Prieſt, Jeſuit, or one of the Seven Sacraments. It was we, and not Madame du Châtelet, who felt the horrors of death. The good King Staniſlaus came to my chamber, and mixed his tears with mine: few of his brethren would have done ſo much on a like occaſion. He wiſhed me to ſtay at Luneville,

ville, but I could no longer ſupport the place, and returned to Paris.

It was my deſtiny to run from King to King, although I loved liberty even to idolatry. The King of Pruſſia, whom I had frequently given to underſtand I would never quit Madame du Châtelet for him, would abſolutely entrap me, now he was rid of his rival. He enjoyed at that time a peace, which he had purchaſed with victory; and his leiſure hours were always devoted to making verſes, or writing the hiſtory of his country and compaigns. He was well convinced, that in reality his verſe and proſe too, were ſuperior to my verſe

and

and profe, as to their effence; though as to the form, he thought there was a certain fomething, a turn, that I in quality of Academician, might give to his writings; and there was no kind of flattery, no feduction, he did not employ to engage me to come.

Who might refift a Monarch, a Hero, a Poet, a Mufician, a Philofopher, who pretended too to love me, and whom I thought I alfo loved. I fat out once more for Potzdam, in the month of June, 1750. Aftolphus did not meet a kinder reception in the palace of Alcina. To be lodged in the fame apartments that Marfhal Saxe had occupied; to have the

royal cooks at my command, when I chose to dine alone; and the royal coachman, when I had an inclination to ride, were trifling favours.

Our suppers were very agreeable. I know not if I am deceived, but I think we had a deal of wit. The King was witty, and gave occasion to wit in others; and what is still more extraordinary, I never found myself so much at my ease. I worked two hours a day with his Majesty, corrected his works, and never failed highly to praise whatever was worthy of praise, although I rejected the dross. I gave him details of all that was necessary in rhetoric and criticism,

for

for his use; he profited by my advice, and his genius assisted him more effectually than my lessons.

I had no court to make, no visits to pay, no duty to fulfil; I led the life of liberty, and had no conception of any thing more happy than my then situation. My Frederic-Alcina, who saw my brain was already a little discorded, redoubled the potions that I might be totally inebriated. The last seduction was a letter he writ, and sent from his apartments to mine. A Mistress could not have written more tenderly; he laboured in his epistle to dissipate the fear which his rank and character had inspir-

ed:

ed: It contained theſe remarkable words:

"How is it poſſible I ſhould bring
"unhappineſs on the man I eſteem, who
"has ſacrificed his country, and all that
"humanity holds dear to me. I reſpect
"you as my Maſter, and love you as
"my friend. What ſlavery, what miſ-
"fortune, what change can be feared,
"in a place where you are eſteemed as
"much as in your own country, and
"with a friend who has a grateful heart.
"I reſpected the friendſhip that endear-
"ed you to Madame du Châtelet, but
"after her I am one of your oldeſt
"friends. I give you my promiſe you
"ſhall

"ſhall be happy here as long as I "live."

Here is a letter, ſuch as few of *their Majeſties* write: it was the finiſhing glaſs to compleat my drunkenneſs. His wordy proteſtations were ſtill ſtronger than his written ones. He was accuſtomed to very ſingular demonſtrations of tenderneſs to younger favourites than I, and forgetting for a moment I was not of their age, and had not a fine hand, he ſeized it and imprinted a kiſs; I took his, returned his ſalute, and ſigned myſelf his ſlave.

It

It was neceſſary I ſhould get permiſſion from the King of France to belong to two Maſters: The King of Pruſſia took charge of every thing, and writ to aſk me of Louis. I never imagined they were ſhocked at Verſailles, that a Gentleman in Ordinary of the Chamber, one of the moſt uſeleſs Beings of a Court, ſhould become a uſeleſs Chamberlain at Berlin. They granted me full permiſſion, but were highly piqued, and did not pardon me. I greatly diſpleaſed the King of France without pleaſing the King of Pruſſia, who laughed at me in the bottom of his heart.

Behold

Behold me then with a ſilver key gilt with gold hanging at my button-hole, a croſs round my neck, and twenty thouſand livres, or eight hundred guineas a year. Maupertuis fell ſick, and yet I did not perceive the occaſion.

At that time there was a Phyſician at Berlin, one La Metrie, who was the moſt frank and declared Atheiſt of all the phyſical people of Europe. He was a gay, pleaſant, thoughtleſs fellow, who knew the theory of phyſic as well as the beſt of his brethren, but without contradiction the worſt practitioner upon earth, for which reaſon he had left the profeſſion. He ridiculed the whole faculty of

of Paris, and had even written many perſonalities againſt individuals, which they could not pardon; and they obtained a decree againſt him, by which a reward was offered for his apprehenſion.

La Meitre, had in conſequence, fled to Berlin, where he amuſed himſelf ſufficiently by his gaiety, and likewiſe by writing and printing all that can be imagined moſt impudent upon manners; his books pleaſed the King, who made him not his Phyſician, but his Reader.

One day after the lecture, La Meitre, who ſpoke whatever came uppermoſt, told his Majeſty there were perſons exceed-

exceedingly jealous of my favour and fortune.—*Be quiet awhile*, ſaid Frederic, *we ſqueeze the orange, and throw it away when we have ſwallowed the juice.*—La Metrie did not forget to repeat to me this fine apophthegm, worthy Dionyſius of Syracuſe. From that time I determined to take all poſſible care of the orange-peel. I had about twelve thouſand guineas to place out at intereſt, but was determined it ſhould not be in the territories of my Alcina. I found an advantageous opportunity of lending them upon the eſtates which the Duke of Wurtemberg poſſeſſed in France.

The King, who opened all my letters, did not doubt of my intention to quit his court. The furor of rhiming, however, still possessing him, as it did Dionysius, I was obliged continually to pore, and again revise his History of Brandenbourg, and all the rest of his works.

La Metrie died from having eaten a pasty stuffed with truffles, after a very hearty dinner at the table of Lord Tyrconnel, Envoy from France. It was pretended he had been confessed before his death. The King was exceedingly vexed at this, and took care to be exactly informed concerning the truth of the

the aſſertion; they aſſured him it was an atrocious, calumny, for La Metrie had died as he lived, abjuring God and Phyſicians. His Majeſty was convinced, and immediately compoſed his funeral oration, which was read, in his name, at a public ſitting of the Academy, by Darget his Secretary. He ſettled five-and-twenty pounds a year likewiſe upon a girl of the town, whom La Metrie had brought from Paris, where he had left his wife and children.

Maupertuis, who knew the anecdote of the orange-peel, took an opportunity to ſpread a report, that I had ſaid, the place of King's Atheiſt was vacant.

This

This calumny did not ſucceed; but he afterwards added I had alſo ſaid, the King's poetry was bad; and this anſwered his purpoſe.

From this time forward, I found the King's ſuppers were no longer ſo merry; I had fewer verſes to correct, and my diſgrace was complete.

Algaroti, Darget, and a Frenchman, whoſe name was Chaſol, one of the King's beſt Officers, left him all at once. I was preparing to do the ſame, but I wiſhed, before I went, to enjoy the pleaſure of laughing at a book Maupertuis had juſt printed. It was the beſt of opportunities,

portunities, for never had any thing appeared ſo ridiculous or abſurd. The good man ſeriouſly propoſed to travel directly to the two Poles; to diſſect the heads of giants, and diſcover the nature of the ſoul by the texture of the brain; to build a city, and make the inhabitants all ſpeak Latin; to ſink a pit to the center of the earth; to cure the ſick, by plaſtering them over with gum-reſin; and, finally, to prophesy, by enthuſiaſtically inflating the fancy.

The King laughed, I laughed, every body laughed at his book; but there was a ſcene acting at that time of a far more ſerious nature, concerning I know not

what mathematical nonſenſe that Maupertuis wanted to eſtabliſh as diſcoveries. A more learned Mathematician, Koënig, Librarian to the Princeſs of Orange at the Hague, ſhewed him his miſtake, and that Leibnitz, who had before him examined that old idea, had demonſtrated its falſity in ſeveral of his letters, copies of which he ſent Maupertuis.

Maupertuis, preſident of the Academy at Berlin, enraged that an aſſociate and a ſtranger ſhould prove his blunders, took care firſt to perſuade the King, that Koënig being ſettled in Holland, was of courſe his enemy; and next, that he had ſaid many diſreſpectful things of his Ma-

jeſty's

jeſty's verſe and proſe to the Princeſs of Orange.

This precaution taken, he ſuborned ſome few poor penſioners of the Academy, his dependents, had Koënig condemned as a forger, and his name eraſed from the number of Academicians. Here however he was anticipated, for Koënig ſent back his patent-Academician-Dignity to Berlin.

All the men of letters in Europe were as full of indignation at the manœuvres of Maupertuis as they were weary of his book, and he obtained the contempt and hatred even of thoſe who did not under-

ſtand the diſpute. They were obliged to content themſelves at Berlin with a mere ſhrug of the ſhoulders; for the King having taken a part in this unfortunate affair, no perſon durſt ſpeak. I was the only one who ſpoke out. Koënig was my friend; and I had at once the ſatisfaction to defend the liberty of the learned, the cauſe of a friend, and of mortifying an enemy, who was as much the enemy of modeſty as of me.

I had no intention to ſtay at Berlin; I had always preferred liberty to every thing; few men of letters have a proper ſenſe of it; moſt of them are poor; poverty enervates, and even philoſo-

phers,

phers, at court, become as truly ſlaves as the firſt Officer of the Crown. I felt how diſpleaſing my free ſpirit muſt be to a King more abſolute than the Grand Turk. He was a pleaſant Monarch, in the receſſes of his palace, we muſt confeſs: he protected Maupertuis, and laughed at him more than any one. He writ againſt him, and ſent his manuſcript to my chamber by one Marvitz, a Miniſter of his ſecret pleaſures; turned to ridicule the Pit to the center of the earth, the method of cure with Plaſter of gum-reſin, the voyage to the South Pole, the Latin city, and the cowardice of the Academy, in having ſuffered the tyranny exerciſed upon poor Koënig. But his

motto

motto was, *No clamour when I don't cry*; and he had every thing burnt that had been written upon the controverſy, except his own work.

I ſent him back his order, his Chamberlain's key, and his penſion; he then did every thing in his power to make me ſtay, and I every thing in my power to depart. He again gave me his croſs and his key, and would have me to ſup with him; I therefore once more ſupped like Democles, after which I parted with a promiſe to return, but with a firm deſign never to ſee him more.

Thus

Thus there were four of us who had escaped in a short time, Chasol, Darget, Algaroti, and I; in fact, there was no such thing as staying. It is well known how much must be borne from Kings, but Frederic was too free in the abuse of his prerogative. All society has its laws, except the society of the Lion and the Lamb. Frederic continually failed in the first of these laws; which is, to say nothing disobliging of any of the company. He often used to ask his Chamberlain Polnitz, if he would not willingly change his religion a fifth time, and offer to pay a hundred crowns down for his conversion. "Good God, my dear Pol-

"nitz,

" nitz, he would ſay, I have forgot the
" name of that perſon at the Hague,
" whom you cheated by ſelling him baſe
" for pure ſilver; let me beg of you to
" aſſiſt my memory a little." He treated poor d'Argens in much the ſame way; and yet theſe two victims remained. Polnitz having waſted his fortune, was obliged to ſwallow ſerpents for bread, and had no other food; and d'Argens had no property in the world, but his Jewiſh Letters, and his wife, called Cochois, a bad provincial actreſs, and ſo ugly ſhe could get no employment at any trade though ſhe practiſed ſeveral. As for Maupertuis, who had been ſilly enough

to

to place out his money at Berlin, and not thinking a hundred piſtoles better in a free country, than a thouſand in a deſpotic one, he had no choice but to wear the fetters which himſelf had forged.

MEMOIRS

OF

VOLTAIRE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE THIRD.

LEAVING my palace of Alcina, I went to paſs a month with the Dutcheſs of Saxe-Gotha, the beſt of Princeſſes, full of gentleneſs, diſcretion, and equanimity, and who, God be thanked, did not make verſes. After that I ſpent a few days at the country-houſe of the

the Landgrave of Heſſe, who was ſtill a remove farther from poetry than the Princeſs of Gotha. Thus I took breath, and thence continued, by ſhort journies, my route to Franckfort, where a very odd kind of deſtiny was in reſerve for me.

I fell ill at Franckfort, and one of my nieces, the widow of a Captain who had belonged to the regiment of Champagne, a moſt amiable woman, with excellent talents, and who, moreover was eſteemed at Paris, as belonging to the Order of Good Company, had the courage to quit that city, and come to me on the Maine, where ſhe found me a priſoner of war.

This fine adventure happened thus: One Freïtag, who had been baniſhed Dreſden, after having been put in chains and condemned to the wheel-barrow, became afterwards, an agent to the King of Pruſſia, who was glad to be ſerved by ſuch-like Miniſters, becauſe they aſked no wages but what they could ſteal from travellers.

This Ambaſſador, and one Schmitt, a tradeſman, formerly condemned and puniſhed for coining, ſignified to me, on the part of his Majeſty, the King of Pruſſia, that I muſt not depart from Franckfort till I had given back the precious effects I had carried off from his Majeſty.

Majesty. " My very good Messieurs, " (said I,) I have brought nothing out " of that country, I can assure you, not " even the least regret; what, then, are " these famous jewels of the crown of " Brandenbourg, that you thus re-de- " mand?"—" *Dat it be, Montseer*, an- swered Freïtag) *ouf dey vurks ouf po- " esy ouf de King mine master.*"—" Oh! " (answered I,) with all my heart; he " shall have his works in verse and prose, " though I have more titles to them than " one, for he made me a present of a " fine copy, printed at his own ex- " pence; but, unfortunately for me, " this printed copy is at Leipsic, with " *my other effects.*"

Freïtag then propoſed that I ſhould ſtay at Franckfort till this treaſure arrived from Leipſic, and ſigned the following curious quittance:

Montſeer, ſo ſoon as ſhawl dey great pack come ouf Leipſic, mit de vurks ouf poeſy be given mit me, you ſhawl go ouf vere you do pleaſe. Given at Franckfort de vurſt of June, 1753.—*Freïtag, Reſident ouf de King mine maſter.*

At the bottom of which I ſigned,—*Good, vor dey vurks ouf poeſy de King your maſter:*—With which the Reſident was well ſatisfied.

On

On the twelfth of June the great *pack* of poesy came, and I faithfully remitted the sacred deposit, imagining I might then depart, without offence to any crowned head; but at the very instant when we were setting off, I, my Secretary, my servants, and even my niece, were arrested. Four Soldiers dragged us through the midst of the dirt, before M. Schmitt, who had I know not what right of Privy-Counsellor to the King of Prussia. This Franckfort trader thought himself at that moment a Prussian General; he commanded twelve of the town guards, with all the importance and grandeur an affair of such consequence required. My niece had a passport from

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the King of France, and moreover, never had corrected the King of Pruſſia's verſes. Women are uſually reſpected amidſt the horrors of war, but the Counſellor Schmitt, and the Reſident Freitag, endeavoured to pay their court to Frederic, by hauling one of the fair ſex through the mud. They ſhut us up in a kind of inn, at the door of which the twelve ſoldiers were poſted. Four others were placed in my chamber, four in the garret, where they had conducted my niece, and four in a ſtill more wreched garret, where my Secretary was laid upon ſtraw. My niece, 'tis true, was allowed a ſmall bed, but four ſoldiers, with fixed bayonets,

nets, ſerved her inſtead of curtains and chamber-maids.

In vain we urged we had been invited to the court the Emperor had elected at Franckfort; that my Secretary was a Florentine, and a ſubject of his Imperial Majeſty; that I and my niece were ſubjects of the Moſt Chriſtian King; and that there was no difference between us and the Margrave of Brandenbourg. They informed us that the Margrave had more power at Franckfort than the Emperor.

Twelve days were we held priſoners of war, for which we paid a hundred and

forty

forty crowns, or ſeventeen pounds ten ſhillings a day. Madame Schmitt had ſeized on all my effects, which were given back one half lighter: One need not wiſh to pay dearer for the *poeſy* of the King of Pruſſia. I loſt about as much as it had coſt him to ſend for me and take leſſons, and we were quits at parting.

To compleat the adventure, one Venduren, a Bookſeller at the Hague, knave by profeſſion, and bankrupt by habit, was then retired to Franckfort. This was the man to whom I had made a preſent thirteen years before of Frederic's manuſcript of the Anti-Machiavel. One

finds

finds friends where one leaſt expects them. He pretended that his Majeſty owed him ſome twenty ducats, for which I was reſponſible: he reckoned the intereſt, and the intereſt of the intereſt. The Sieur Friliard, a Burgo-maſter of Franckfort, in the then year of his reign, ſaid he, as a Burgo-maſter, found the account exceedingly right; he likewiſe found the means to make me diſburſe thirty ducats, ſix and twenty of which he took to himſelf, and gave the remaining four to the honeſt Bookſeller.

Theſe Oſtrogothian and Vandalian affairs being all thus ſatisfactorily ended, I em-

I embraced my hoſts, thanked them for their kind reception, and departed.

Some time after I went to drink the waters of Plombieres, and with them drank heartily of the waters of Leathe, from a thorough perſuaſion, that misfortunes of all kinds are good for nothing but to be forgot. My niece, Madame Denis, who was the conſolation of my life, attached to me by her taſte for letters, and the tendereſt friendſhip, accompanied me from Plombieres to Lyons. Here I was received by the acclamations of the whole city, and tolerably well too by the Cardinal de Tencin, Archbiſhop

of

of Lyons, ſo well known, by the manner in which he had made his fortune: that is, in making the famous Law, or Laſs, Author of the ſyſtem that ruined France, a Catholic. His Council of Embrun finiſhed the fortune his converſion of Law had begun. This ſyſtem made him rich enough to purchaſe a Cardinal's hat. He was a Miniſter of State, and told me in confidence, he durſt not give me a public dinner becauſe the King of France was vexed that I had quitted him for the King of Pruſſia. To this I anſwered, I never dined, and as to Kings or Cardinals, I was the man who perhaps of any in the world was ſooneſt determined how to act.

I had been adviſed to drink the waters of Aix, in Savoy, and though this place was under the dominion of a King, I proceeded to take the journey. I neceſſarily paſſed through Geneva, where the famous Phyſician Tronchin was juſt eſtabliſhed, and who declared the waters of Aix would kill, but that he would cure me, and I followed his advice. No Catholic is permitted to ſettle at Geneva, nor yet in the Swiſs Proteſtant Cantons; and it was to me a ſubject of pleaſantry, to acquire domains in the only country upon earth where it was forbid I ſhould have any.

I bought, by a very ſingular kind of contract, of which there was no example

in

in that country, a ſmall eſtate of about ſixty acres, which they ſold me for about twice as much as it would have coſt me at Paris; but pleaſure is never too dear. The houſe was pretty and commodious, and the proſpect charming; it aſtoniſhes without tiring: on one ſide is the Lake of Geneva, and the city on the other. The Rhone runs from the former in vaſt guſhes, forming a canal at the bottom of my garden, whence is ſeen the Arve deſcending from the Savoy Mountains, and precipating itſelf into the Rhone, and farther ſtill another river. A hundred country-ſeats, a hundred delightful gardens, ornament the borders of the lakes

and

and rivers. The Alps at a vaſt diſtance riſe and terminate the horizon, and among their prodigious precipices, twenty leagues extent of mountain are beheld covered with eternal ſnows.

I had another good houſe with a more extenſive view, at Lauſanne; but a ſeat near Geneva is much more agreeable. In theſe two habitations I enjoyed what Kings do not give, or rather what they take away, Liberty and Eaſe. I likewiſe had what they ſometimes do give, and what I had not of them. Here then I put my own precepts in practice.

How happy did I live in this iron age! Every convenience of life and

good

good cheer were found in my two houſes. An affable and intelligent ſociety, filled up the moments which ſtudy and the care of my health left vacant; and here I had more than one opportunity of driving ſorrow from the boſoms of my dear fellow labourers in literature. I was not however born rich, and it may be aſked by what art I could acquire wealth enough to live like a Farmer-general; to which I anſwer, and I would have others make me their example, I had ſeen ſo many men of letters poor and deſpiſed, that I had long determined not to augment the number.

In France every man muſt be either the hammer or the anvil, and I was

born the latter. A ſmall patrimony daily becomes leſs, becauſe the price of every thing encreaſes in time, and becauſe government often has both rent and crop.

It is neceſſary to be attentive to every alteration, which Miniſtry, ever in want and ever inconſtant, makes in the finances. There always are occaſional opportunities, by which an individual may profit without obligation to any one, and nothing is ſo agreeable as to be oneſelf the founder of one's fortune. The firſt efforts are a little painful, the following are pleaſant; and he who is an œconomiſt in his youth, will be ſupriſed in old age

at

at his own wealth, which is the time when fortune is moſt neceſſary. It was then I enjoyed fortune: that after having lived with Kings, I became a King myſelf.

And now, while living in this peaceable opulence, and the moſt rigid independence, the King of Pruſſia thought proper to be appeaſed: in 1755 he ſent me an Opera he had made from my Tragedy of Merope, which was, without diſpute, the worſt thing he ever writ. From that time he continued to write to me: I always had held a correſpondence with his ſiſter the Margraveſs of Bareith, whoſe

whoſe good-will towards me was unalterable.

Thus while I, in my retreat, enjoyed the moſt pleaſant life imaginable, I had the philoſophic ſatisfaction of ſeeing, that the Kings of Europe taſted not of my tranquillity; and of thence inferring, that the ſituation of an individual is often preferable to that of the greateſt Kings, as will preſently be ſeen.

In 1756, England made a piratical war upon France for ſome acres of ſnow; at the ſame time that the Empreſs Queen of Hungary appeared very deſirous to recover her dear Sileſia, of which ſhe had

had been pillaged by his Majesty of Prussia. For this purpose she negociated with the Empress of Russia and the King of Poland, that is, in quality of Elector of Saxony, for nobody negociates with the Poles. On the other hand, the King of France wished to revenge himself upon Hanover for the mischief which the Elector of Hanover, the King of England, did him at sea. Frederic, who at that time was in alliance with France, and who held our government in the most profound contempt, preferred an alliance with England; he therefore united himself with the House of Hanover, imagining he could keep the Russians out of Prussia with one hand, and

the

the French out of Germany with the other. He was miſtaken in both theſe imaginings; but there was a third in which he was not miſtaken; this was, to invade Saxony under pretext of friendſhip, and make war upon the Empreſs Queen of Hungary with the money he ſhould rob the Saxons of. The Marquis of Brandenbourg, by this remarkable manœuvre, ſingly changed the whole ſyſtem of Europe. The King of France, deſirous of retaining him in his alliance, ſent the Duke de Nivernois, a man of wit, and who made very pretty verſes, into Pruſſia. The embaſſage of a Duke, a peer, and a Poet, ſeemed likely to flatter the vanity and taſte of Frederic; but he

laughed

laughed at the King of France, and ſigned his treaty with England. The very day the Ambaſſador arrived, he played off the Duke and the peer very happily, and made an epigram upon the Poet.

It happened at that time to be the privilege of poetry to govern kingdoms. There was another Poet at Paris alſo, a man of rank, very poor, but very amiable; in a word, the Abbé de Bernis, ſince Cardinal. He began by writing verſes againſt me; he afterwards was my friend, though that was of little ſervice to him; but he likewiſe became the friend of Madame de Pompadour, and ſhe ſerved him effectually. He had

been

been ſent from Parnaſſus on an embaſſy to Venice; and he was then returned to Paris and in great credit.

The King of Pruſſia had glided a verſe in his poor book of poeſy, which that Freitag had re-demanded ſo earneſtly at Franckfort, againſt the Abbé de Bernis.

"*Avoid the ſteril abundance of Bernis.*"

I do not believe either the book or the verſe ever reached the Abbé; but as God is juſt, God made him an inſtrument to avenge France of Frederic. The Abbé concluded an offenſive and defenſive treaty with M. de Staremberg, the

the Auſtrian Ambaſſador, in deſpight of Rouillé, then Miniſter for Foreign Affairs. Madame de Pompadour preſided at that negociation; and Rouillé was obliged to ſign the treaty, in conjunction with the Abbé de Bernis, which was a precedent without example. Rouillé, it muſt be owned, was the moſt uſeleſs Secretary of State the King ever had; and moreover, the moſt ignorant the Long Robe ever knew. He aſked one day if Wateravia was in Italy? While there was nothing difficult to tranſact he was ſuffered; but as ſoon as great objects came on the tapis, his inſufficiency was felt, and the Abbé de Bernis ſupplied his place.

Mademoiſelle Poiſſon, the wife of Le Normand, and Marchioneſs de Pompadour, was in reality firſt Miniſter of State. Certain outrageous terms let ſlip againſt her by Frederic, who neither ſpared women nor poets, had wounded the Marchioneſs to the heart, and contributed not a little to that revolution in affairs, which, in a moment, re-united the French and Auſtrians after more than two hundred years of a hatred ſuppoſed to be immortal. The court of France, that pretended to cruſh Auſtria in 1741, ſupported her in 1756; and in conclu-ſion, France, Sweden, Ruſſia, Hungary, the half of Germany, and the Fiſcal of the Empire, all declared againſt the ſingle

Marquis

Marquis of Brandenburgh. This Prince whoſe grandfather could ſcarcely maintain twenty thouſand men, had an army of an hundred thouſand foot, and forty thouſand horſe, well provided, well ſelected, and better diſciplined; but there were four hundred thouſand men in arms to oppoſe theſe. It happened in that war, that each party ſeized upon what was next at hand. Frederic took Saxony; France took the territories of Frederic, from the town of Guelders to Minden upon the Weſer, and for a while poſſeſſed all the Electorate of Hanover and Heſſe, the allies of Frederic; while the Empreſs of Ruſſia, took the whole of Pruſſia. The King of Pruſſia beaten at

firſt by the Ruſſians, beat the Auſtrians, and was afterwards beaten by them in Bohemia the eighteenth of June, 1757.

The loſs of one battle ought apparently to have cruſhed this Monarch; preſſed on all ſides by the Ruſſians, French and Auſtrians, he himſelf gave all for loſt. Marſhal de Richelieu had juſt concluded a treaty near Stade, with the Hanoverians and Heſſians, which greatly reſembled that of the *Caudian Forks*. Their army was no longer allowed to ſerve, and the Marſhal was ready to enter Saxony with ſixty thouſand men: the Prince de Soubiſe prepared to penetrate it on another ſide with thirty thouſand,

ſand, and was to be ſeconded by the arms of the circles of the empire, whence they were to march to Berlin. The Auſtrians had gained a ſecond victory, and were already in poſſeſſion of Breſlau; and one of their Generals had even puſhed to Berlin, and laid it under contribution. The treaſury of the King of Pruſſia was nearly exhauſted, and in all appearance he would not long have a ſingle village left. They were going to put him under the ban of the empire; his proceſs was begun; he was declared a rebel, and had he been taken, in all probability would have been condemned to loſe his head.

In this extremity he took a fancy to kill himſelf. He writ to his ſiſter, the Margraveſs of Bareith, that he was going to terminate his life; but he could not conclude the play without rhyming. His paſſion for poetry was ſtill ſtronger than his hatred of life; he therefore writ to the Marquis d'Argens a long epiſtle in verſe, wherein he informed him of his reſolution, and bid him adieu.

However ſingular this epiſtle may be, from the ſubject, the perſon by whom it was written, and the perſon to whom it was addreſſed, it cannot be tranſcribed entirely, becauſe of the many repetitions; but there are paſſages, which

which I will insert, tolerably well turned for a Northern King.

Yes, D'Argens, yes; the die, my friend, is cast;
Sick of the present, weary of the past,
To bear Misfortune's yoke no longer prone,
Henceforth or pains or pleasures I disown;
Nor thus in mis'ry will I deign to live,
The lengthen'd day, which Nature meant to give;
With heart well fortify'd, with eye as firm,
Undaunted I approach the happy term,
When night eternal shall my foes confound,
And fate no more shall have the power to wound.
Grandeurs adieu!—adieu chimeras all!
No more your flashes dazzle or appal;
Though on my morn of life you falsely smil'd,
And, prone to vain desires, my soul beguil'd,
Long since have vanish'd all desires so vain,
And Truth and stern Philosophy remain.

How

How frivolous you were by Zeno taught,
Your errors are no longer worth a thought.
Adieu, ye gentle pleasures and delights,
Seductive nymphs, whose flowery yoke unites,
The sweets of smiling Gaiety and Ease,
And all the idle arts by which you please.
But oh! shall I, Misfortune's bondman, speak
Of pleasures and delights, where sorrows shriek!
Can plaintive nightingale, or turtle-dove,
When vultures tear them, sing or coo of love?
Long has the star of day but lighted me
To new born ills, increase of misery;
His poppies Morpheus has disdain'd to shed,
Near the dank turf where I have lain my head;
Each morn I cry, and still the tear o'erflows,
Behold another day, and other woes.
When night appears, night cannot give relief,
Each moment adds eternity to grief.
Heroes of Liberty, whom I revere,
Brutus and Cato, ye of soul sincere,

Your

Your deaths, illuſtrious, diſſipate my gloom,
Your funeral flambeaux light me to my tomb;
Your antique virtue Fear and Death controls,
And points a road unknown to vulgar ſouls.
Vaniſh, ye pompous Phantoms of romance,
Ingend'ring ſuperſtitious ignorance;
Religious aid I ſeek not when I'd know
Or what we are, or whence we come or go;
Epicurus has taught how I'm annoy'd,
My body by injurious time deſtroyed;
And for the quick'ning fire, the ſpark, the breath,
Mortal like me, it periſhes in death:
Part of a being organiz'd 'tis born,
Grows with the Child, and doth the man adorn;
Suffers when I'm in pain, pleas'd when I am pleas'd,
Is old when I am, ill when I'm diſeas'd;
And when eternal night ſhall life inveſt,
Will ſink, like me, to everlaſting reſt.
A vanquiſh'd fugitive, by friends betray'd,
I ſuffer torments more than e'er were laid

As moſt fictitious lying fables tell)
On poor Prometheus in the depths of Hell;
Therefore, as wretches who in dungeons deep,
Weary of thus exiſting but to weep,
Deceive their butchers, ſnap their ſtrongeſt chains,
And end at once their being and their pains;
So, with one noble effort, will I rend
The web of life, and all my mis'ries end.
This dreary picture will inform thee why
I thus, my friend, have been induc'd to die;
Nor hence conclude I vainly ſeek to claim,
From the dark ſenſeleſs grave, the bubble Fame:
But yet remember me when fruitful earth
Gives odoriferous ſhrubs and myrtles birth;
Each ſpring, when flowers adorn the youthful year,
Drop o'er my tomb a roſe-bud and a tear.

He ſent me this epiſtle written with his own hand. Several lines are pillaged from the

the Abbé de Chaulieu and me. The ideas are often incoherent, and the verſes in general unmuſical; but there are ſome good; and it was a great thing for a King to write two hundred bad verſes in the ſtate he then was. He was deſirous it ſhould be ſaid he preſerved all his preſence of mind and liberty of thinking, at a moment when they are uſually loſt to others.

The letter he writ me teſtified the ſame ſentiments, but there were leſs of *eternal Night*, *Myrtles and Roſes*, *Flambeaux*, *Chimeras*, *and ſhrieking Sorrows*. I combated in proſe the reſolution he had taken to die, and had not much trouble

in

in perſuading him to live. I adviſed him to imitate the Duke of Cumberland, and ſet a negociation on foot with Marſhal Richelieu; in ſhort, I took all the liberties one could take with a deſpairing Poet, and who was not likely much longer to be a King. He writ to Marſhal Richelieu, but not receiving any anſwer he determined to beat us, and ſent me word he was going to attack Marſhal de Soubiſe. His letter finiſhed with verſes, worthy of his ſituation, his dignity, his courage, and his wit.

When ſhipwreck ſtares us in the face,
Daring let us death embrace,
And live and die a King.

As

As he marched towards the French and Imperialiſts, he writ to the Margraveſs his ſiſter, that he ſhould kill himſelf, but he was happier than he ſaid or hoped. He waited on the fifth of November, 1757, for the French and Imperial army, in a tolerably advantageous poſt, at Roſbach, on the frontiers of Saxony; and as he had been continually talking of killing himſelf, he was willing his brother Prince Henry, ſhould perform this promiſe for him, at the head of five Pruſſian battalions, which were to ſuſtain the firſt ſhock of the enemy, while his artillery thundered upon them, and his cavalry attacked theirs.

Prince Henry was, in fact, ſlightly wounded in the neck by a muſket-ball, and I believe was the only Pruſſian hurt on that day. The French and Auſtrians fled at the firſt diſcharge, and the rout was the moſt unheard of and complete that Hiſtory can afford. The battle of Roſbach ſhall long be celebrated. Thirty thouſand French, and twenty thouſand Imperialiſts, were ſeen flying, ſhamefully and precipitately, before five battalions and ſome ſquadrons. The defeats of Agincourt, Creſſy, and Poictiers, were not more humiliating. The diſcipline and military evolutions, which the father had began and the ſon made perfect, were the true cauſe of this ſtrange vic-

tory.

tory. The Pruſſian exerciſe had been fifty years in bringing to perfection. They wiſhed to imitate them in France as well as in other countries; but they could not effect that with the French, naturally averſe to diſcipline, in four years, which the Pruſſians had been fifty about. They had even changed their manœuvres in France at each review, ſo that the officers and ſoldiers, not half perfect in each new one, and the evolutions being all different from one another, had in reality learnt nothing, but was actually without any kind of diſcipline. All was in diſorder at the very ſight of the Pruſſians; and Fortune, in one quarter of an hour, ſnatched Frederic from the

depth

depth of deſpair to ſeat him on the heights of happineſs and glory.

He was, however, very fearful, that this good fortune was merely temporary; he dreaded to ſupport the whole weight of the French, Ruſſian, and Auſtrian powers, and was deſirous of detaching Louis XV. from Maria-Tereſa.

The fatal affair at Roſbach, occaſioned all France to murmur at the treaty of the Abbé de Bernis with the court of Vienna. The Cardinal de Tencin, Archbiſhop of Lyons, had always maintained his rank of Miniſter of State, and a private correſpondence with the King of

France,

France, and he was, more than any one, averſe to the Auſtrian alliance. He had given me a reception at Lyons, which he had a right to believe was not very ſatisfactory; the itch of intriguing, however, which followed him in his retreat, and which, it is ſaid, never leaves men in place, made him deſirous of leaguing with me to engage the Margraveſs of Bareith to treat with him, and put the intereſts of her brother in his hands. He would reconcile the King of Pruſſia to the King of France, and hoped to procure a peace. It was not difficult to perſuade Madame de Bareith, and the King her brother, to this negociation; and I undertook it with the greater ala-

crity, becauſe I foreſaw it succeed. The Margraveſs wrote to Frederic, and the letters between her and the Cardinal paſſed through my hands. I had the ſecret ſatisfaction of being the intermediator in that grand affair; and perhaps a ſtill farther pleaſure, that of foreſeeing the Cardinal was preparing for himſelf a ſubject of great diſappointment. He writ to the King of France, and incloſed the letter of the Margraveſs; but how utter was his aſtoniſhment at receiving a laconic anſwer from the King, informing him, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs would inform him of his royal intentions. The Abbé de Bernis dictated the anſwer which the Cardinal

was

was obliged to ſend to Frederic; which anſwer was an entire refuſal to negociate. He was forced to ſign a copy of this letter, by which every thing was ended, and died of chagrin in about a fortnight afterwards.

I never could thoroughly underſtand this kind of death, or how Miniſters of State, and old Cardinals with hardened ſouls, ſhould have a ſufficient degree of ſenſibility, to die through ſome trifling diſguſt. My deſign was only to laugh at him; to mortify, and not to kill.

There was a kind of greatneſs in the Miniſtry refuſing thus to treat of peace with

with the King of Pruſſia, after having been beaten by him, and humbled; there was alſo great fidelity and good-nature in ſacrificing themſelves for the Houſe of Auſtria; but theſe virtues were long ill recompenſed by Fortune. The Hanoverians, Heſſians, and Brunſwickians, were leſs obſervant of public faith, but more ſucceſsful. They had ſtipulated with the Marſhal de Richelieu not to bear arms againſt us, nor to repaſs the Elbe, beyond which they had been ſent back; they, however broke their bargain of the *Caudian Forks* as ſoon as they knew we had been beaten at Roſbach. Deſertion, the want of diſcipline, and diſeaſe, *deſtroyed* our armies; and the reſult of

all

all our operations, in the ſpring of 1758, was, that we had loſt twelve millions and a half ſterling, and fifty thouſand men in Germany, in ſupport of Maria-Tereſa, as we had done in 1741 with fighting againſt her.

The King of Pruſſia, who had beaten our army at Roſbach, in Thuringua, went next to fight the Auſtrian army at ſixty leagues diſtance. The French then might ſtill have entered Saxony; the victors were gone, there was nothing to oppoſe them; but they had thrown away their arms, loſt their cannon, ammunition, proviſions, and eſpecially their underſtanding. They were diſperſed

and

and their remains were with difficulty collected. A month afterwards, and on the ſame day, Frederic gained a ſtill more ſignal and better fought victory over the Auſtrians near Breſlau. He retook Breſlau with fifteen thouſand priſoners, and the reſt of Sileſia was ſoon ſubdued. Guſtavus Adolphus never performed ſuch acts; we muſt therefore pardon him his poetry, his pleaſantries, his little malice, and even his feminine ſins. The defects of the man vaniſh before the glory of the hero.

I left writing memoirs of myſelf on the ſixth of November, 1759, thinking them

them as uſeleſs as Bayle's letters to his mother; the life of St. Evremont, written by Deſmaiſeaux, or of the Abbé Mongon, written by himſelf. But many things, either new or laughable, have again induced me to the ridicule of ſpeaking of myſelf*. I behold from my windows the city where John Chauvin, the Picard, called Calvin, reigned; and the place where he burnt Servet for the good of his ſoul. Almoſt all the Prieſts of this country think at preſent like Servet: nay they even go farther. They do not believe that Jeſus Chriſt

* From this paſſage, and others, it is evident theſe memoirs were addreſſed to ſome individual, a Lady, by Voltaire.

was God; and these Messieurs, who formerly gave no quarter to purgatory, are now so far humanised, as to find favour for souls in hell. They pretend their torments shall not be eternal; that Theseus shall not always sit upon his stony chair, nor Sysiphus continue everlastingly to roll his rock. Thus they have turned their hell, in which they no longer believe, into purgatory, in which also they do not believe. This is rather a pleasant revolution in the History of the human mind, and might furnish disputes enough for the cutting of throats, making of bonfires, and acting St. Bartholomew's day once more. And yet they do not even call names, and reproach

proach one another, ſo much are manners changed. I muſt indeed except myſelf, whom one of their Preachers attacked for having dared to aſſert that Calvin, the Picard, was of a cruel nature, and had burnt Servet without cauſe. Only obſerve the contradictions of this world; here are people almoſt avowedly ſectaries of Servet, who, yet, abuſe me becauſe I found Calvin wrong for burning him at a ſlow fire of green faggots.

They *would* prove to me in form, that Calvin was a good chriſtian, and petitioned the council of Geneva to communicate the papers uſed on the trial of

Servet; but the Council was more prudent; the papers were refuſed, and they forbidden to write againſt me in Geneva. I look upon this little triumph, as one of the ſtrongeſt proofs of the progreſs of reaſon in our age.

Philoſophy enjoyed a ſtill more ſignal victory over its enemies at Lauſanne. Some Goſpel Miniſters of that country thought proper to compile, I know not what bad book againſt me, for the honour, as they called it, of chriſtianity; and I, with little difficulty, was empowered to ſeize and ſuppreſs the impreſſion by authority of the Magiſtrates. This was perhaps the firſt time Theologians have

been

been obliged to be ſilent, and reſpect a Philoſopher. Judge then if I ought not paſſionately to love this country. Yes, thinking beings, I aſſert it is exceedingly agreeable to live in a republic where you may ſay to its chiefs,—Come tomorrow and dine with me.

I did not, however, yet think myſelf perfectly free; and as I held this a ſubject worthy attention, that I might become ſo, I purchaſed ſome adjoining lands in France. There were two eſtates, about a league from Geneva, which had formerly enjoyed all the privileges of that city; and I had the good fortune to obtain a Brevet from the King, by which

thoſe privileges were continued to me. At laſt I ſo managed my deſtiny, that I was independent in Switzerland, in the territories of Geneva, and in France. I have heard much of liberty, but do not believe there is an individual in Europe who had wrought his own freedom like me. Let thoſe who will, follow my example; or rather, thoſe who can.

I certainly could not have choſen a better time than this, to enjoy repoſe far from Paris. They were then as mad and inveterate about their private diſputes as in the days of the Fronde, except having actually a civil war. But as they had neither a Monarch of the

market-

market-place like the Duke de Beaufort, nor a Coadjutor, granting benedictions with a dagger, they proceeded only to wordy wars. They began by forging bank bills for the other world, invented as I have already ſaid by Beaumont, Archbiſhop of Paris, an obſtinate man, who did evil with all his heart, and from an exceſs of zeal. He was a ſerious fool, ſomething in the ſtyle of St. Thomas à Becket. The quarrel grew more violent concerning an office in the hoſpital, the appointment to which the Parliament pretended was in them; and the Archbiſhop holding it to be a ſacred place, ſaid it depended totally on the church. Paris was all divided into par-

ties, and the trifling factions of Janſeniſts and Moliniſts did not ſpare each other. The King thought proper to treat them as they ſometimes ſerve fools who fight in the ſtreet, over whom they throw buckets of water to part them: he very rightly ſaid they were both wrong; but they remained not the leſs envenomed. He exiled the Archbiſhop and the Parliament; but a maſter ſhould not turn off his ſervants, till he is certain of finding others to ſupply their places. The Court was obliged to recall the Parliament, becauſe a Chamber, called royal, compoſed of Counſellors of State, and Maſters of Requeſts, and erected to determine Law-ſuits, had loſt its practice.

The

The Parisians had taken a fancy not to plead before any court of justice, except that called the Parliament. All the members therefore were recalled, and imagined they had gained a signal victory over the King. They paternally advised him in their remonstrances no more to banish his Parliament, because, said they, *that is giving a very bad example.* They proceeded to such lengths at last, that the King resolved to abolish one of their Chambers, and diminish the others; and soon after these Messieurs, all had their dismission, except those of the great Chamber. Loud murmurs now went abroad; they publicly declaimed against the King, and the fire which came out of their mouth unhappily caught the

brain

brain of a Lackey, named Damiens, who often frequented the great Hall. It is proved by the proceſs, this fanatic of the long robe never intended to kill the King, but only to inflict a gentle correction. There is nothing ſo abſurd which may not enter the head of man. This poor wretch had been uſher to the Jeſuit's College, where I have ſometimes ſeen the ſcholars give ſlight ſtabs with their penknives, and the uſhers return them. Damiens, therefore went to Verſailles with this reſolution, and there in the midſt of his courtiers and guards wounded the King with a ſmall penknife.

They did not fail during the firſt horror of the accident, to impute the blow to

the arm of the Jesuits, to whom, said they, it belonged according to ancient usage. I have read a letter from one father Griffet, in which he says, *This time it was not us; it is at present the turn of Messieurs.* It was of course the office of the Grand Prevot of the Court to judge the assassin, because the crime had been committed within the precincts of the palace. The culprit began by accusing seven members of the court *des Enquêtes*, and they wished nothing better than to leave this accusation upon record, and execute the criminal. Thus the King rendered the Parliament odious, and obtained an advantage which will endure as long as the Monarchy.

MEMOIRS

OF

VOLTAIRE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE FOURTH AND LAST.

IT was thought that M. d'Argenſon adviſed the King to grant the parliament permiſſion to judge the foregoing affair, and he was well rewarded; for eight days after he loſt his place, and was exiled. The King had the weakneſs to grant large penſions to the Counſellors

who

who conducted the trial of Damiens, as if they had rendered him ſome ſignal and difficult ſervice; which conduct inſpired them with new confidence. They again imagined themſelves important perſonages, and their chimeras of repreſenting the nation, and being tutors to Kings, were once more awakened.

This ſcene over, and having nothing elſe to do, they amuſed themſelves with perſecuting the philoſophers. Omer Joli de Fleury, Advocate-General of the parliament of Paris, diſplayed a triumph the moſt complete, that ignorance, deceit, and hypocriſy, ever obtained. Several men of letters moſt

eſtimable

eſtimable from their learning and deportment, formed an aſſociation to compoſe an immenſe dictionary of whatever could enlighten the human mind, and it became an object of commerce with the bookſellers. The Chancellor, the Miniſtry, all encouraged an enterprize ſo noble; ſeven volumes had already appeared; and were tranſlated into Engliſh, Italian, German, and Dutch. This treaſure opened by the French to all nations, might be conſidered as what did us at that time the moſt honour; ſo much were the excellent articles in the Encyclopedia ſuperior to the bad, which were alſo tolerably numerous. They had little to complain of in the work, except

too

too many puerile declamations unfortunately adopted by the authors of the collection, who seized whatever came to hand to swell the book; but all which those authors writ themselves was good.

Omer Joli de Fleury, however, on the twenty-third of February, 1759, accused these poor philosophers of being Atheists, Deists, corrupters of youth, rebels to the King, &c. &c. &c. and to prove his accusation, cited St. Paul, and the trials of Theophilus and Abraham Chaumaix*.

* Abraham Chaumaix, formerly * * * since Jansenist and Convulsionary, was then the oracle of the parliament of Paris. Omer Joli de Fleury cited him as a Father of the Church; he has since been a school-master at Moscow.

He wanted nothing but to have read the book againſt which he exclaimed; for if he had read it, he was a ſtrange imbecile being. He demanded juſtice of the Court againſt the article *ſoul*, which, according to him, was pure materialiſm.

Pray remark that the article *ſoul*, one of the worſt in the work, was written by a poor Doctor of the Sorbonne, who killed himſelf with declaiming, right or wrong, againſt materialiſm.

The whole diſcourſe of this Omer Joli de Fleury was a ſtring of ſimilar blunders. He informed againſt a book he had either not read, or not under-

ſtood;

ſtood; and the entire parliament, at the requiſition of Omer, condemned the work not only without examining, but even without reading a ſingle page. This manner of doing juſtice, is very much beneath the cuſtom of Bridoye, for there they may chance to be right.

The editors had procured the King's privilege, and the parliament certainly had no right to revoke a privilege granted by his Majeſty. It appertains to them neither to Judge of an *Arrêt du Conſeil*, nor of any thing confirmed in Chancery: they however aſſumed the power to condemn what the Chancellor had approved, and appointed Lawyers

to

to decide upon the ſubjects of geometry and metaphyſics contained in the Encyclopedia. A chancellor of the leaſt fortitude would have annulled the Arret of parliament as incompetent: the Chancellor L'Amoignon ſatisfied himſelf with revoking the privilege, that he might not undergo the ſhame of ſeeing what he had ſtamped with the ſeal of ſupreme authority judged and condemned.

One would imagine this adventure had happened in the days of Father Garaſſe, and that theſe were arrets againſt taking emetics; but on the contrary, it was in the moſt enlightened age France had ever ſeen. So true is it

that

that *one fool is enough to dishonour a nation.*

No one will ſcruple to confeſs, that under ſuch circumſtances, Paris was no reſting-place for a Philoſopher, and that Ariſtotle was very prudent in retiring to Chalcis when Fanaticiſm reigned at Athens. Beſides, the condition of a man of letters at Paris, is but one ſtep above a Mountebank.

The place of Gentleman in ordinary to his Majeſty, which the King had given me, was no great thing. Men are very ſilly; for my part, I think it much better to build a fine houſe, as I

id, have a theatre, and keep a good table, than to be hunted at Paris like Helvetius, by people holding the court of parliament, or by other people holding the stables of the Sorbonne. As I was certain I could neither make men more reasonable, the parliament less pedantic, nor the Theologians less ridiculous, I continued to be happy far from their follies.

And yet while I contemplate the storm, I am almost ashamed of my own tranquillity. I behold Germany dyed in blood; France utterly ruined; our fleets and armies beaten; our Ministers dismissed, one after another, without any

prospe

prospect of better success; and the King of Portugal assassinated, not by a Lackey, but the Nobility of the kingdom. Neither can the Jesuits this time say *it was not us*: they have carefully preserved their rights; it has been sufficiently proved these good Fathers had given the sanctified knife to the Parricides. They give for reason their sovereignty of Paraguay, and said they have treated with the King of Portugal as from crown to crown.

I shall now relate a trifling, but as singular an adventure as ever happened since Kings and Poets first were seen on earth. Frederic having passed some

time

time guarding the Frontiers of Silesia in an impenetrable camp, began to be tired of inactivity; and therefore to pass time away, composed an Ode, and signed it Frederic; this he put at the head of an enormous bundle of verse and prose, which he sent to me. I opened the package, and found I had not been the first who had performed that operation; it was evident the seals had been broken, and I was terrified at reading the following verses:

Oh trifling nation, light and vain!
Are these the warriors whom Turenne
And Luxembourg with laurels bound,
With Fame's immortal honours crown'd;

Who,

Who, as we're told in ancient ſtory,
Danger and death deſpis'd for glory?
Lo the vile rout! behold each ſlave
Fearful in fight, in pillage brave!

Behold their feeble monarch move,
The tool of Pompadour and Love!
To Love opprobrious, as to Fame,
Unworthy he the Monarch's name:
At random ſee he flings the reins,
Deteſting Empire's anxious pains;
His land and people in diſtreſs,
He revels on in lewd exceſs;
Himſelf a ſlave, when pride inflates,
Would dictate laws to Kings and States.

I trembled as I read the poem, ſome lines of which are excellent, or may paſs for ſuch. I had unfortunately acquired, and deſerved, the reputation of having been

been the continual corrector of the King of Prussia's poetry. The packet had been opened, the verses read, might perhaps be published, the King of France would attribute them to me, and I should become not only guilty of high treason against the King, but, which is still worse, against Madame de Pompadour.

In this perplexity I desired the French Resident at Geneva to come to my house, and shewed him the packet. He agreed it had been opened before it arrived, and thought there was no other way of acting in a case where the safety of my head was concerned, but sending it as it was to the Duke de Choiseul, Minister of

State.

State. In any ſituation but this I ſhould not have followed his advice; but it was neceſſary to prevent my own ruin, and I acquainted the court with the true character of its enemy. I knew the Duke de Choiſeul would not betray me, but content himſelf with perſuading his Majeſty that Frederic was an enemy, whom, if they could, they ought to cruſh.

The Duke did not ſtop here; he was a man of wit, wrote verſes, and had friends who wrote alſo: He paid the King of Pruſſia in his own coin, and ſent me a ſatire againſt Frederic, as biting and unmerciful as his own. The follow-

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ing lines, are extracts from this Poem *:

No longer he the man, by whom
The arts from black oblivion's tomb
Were call'd and o'er Germania spread :
A husband, brother, son of guilt,
His Sire in justice, would have spilt
The blood which so much blood has shed.

Yet he audacious, durst aspire
To touch Apollo's sacred lyre ;
The rhyming King of Poet-tasters :
His Mars and Phœbus are the same,
Alike in war and verse his fame,
Zoilus and Mævius are his masters.

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* I have been assured by M. the P. F. of S. this Ode was written by S. Palinot de Montenoy.

Behold,

Behold, in ſpite of all his guards,
Where Nero meets the due rewards
Of all his hideous provocations;
The Tyrant ſee of Syracuſe
Now proſtitute a barren muſe.
Deſpis'd while he inſults the nations.

And wherefore, Savage Cenſor, ſay,
Would'ſt thou impede their harmleſs play,
When Love, with Nature, ſmiling comes?
Shalt thou pretend to judge their rites,
Who ne'er could'ſt taſte but thoſe delights
Imparted by thy noiſy drums?

The Duke de Choiſeul aſſured me when he ſent this anſwer, that he would print the ſatire if the King of Pruſſia publiſhed his; and added, they would beat him as heartily with the pen, as they

hoped to do with the ſword. Had I been inclined ſo to amuſe myſelf, it depended only on me to ſet the King of France and the King of Pruſſia to war in rhime, which would have been a farce of novelty upon earth. But I enjoyed another pleaſure; that of being more prudent than Frederic. I writ him word his ode was beautiful, but that he ought not to publiſh it; he had glory enough without that, and ſhould not ſhut every door of reconciliation with the King of France, aggravate him beyond bearing, and force him to ſome deſperate effort to obtain a juſt revenge. I added, my niece had burnt his ode, in mortal fear of its being imputed to me. He believed

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me, and returned me thanks; but not without a few reproaches, for having burnt the beſt verſes he had ever written. The Duke de Choiſeul kept his word and was diſcreet.

To make the pleaſantry compleat, I thought it poſſible to lay the foundation of the peace of Europe on theſe poetical pieces, which might have continued the war to the deſtruction of Frederic. My correſpondence with the Duke de Choiſeul gave birth to that idea; and it appeared ſo ridiculous, ſo worthy the tranſactions of the times, that I indulged it, and had myſelf the ſatisfaction of proving on what weak and inviſible pivots the

deſtinies of nations turn. The Duke writ me ſeveral oſtenſible letters, conceived in ſuch terms, as the King of Pruſſia might venture to make overtures of peace without danger of Auſtria taking umbrage at France; and Frederic returned anſwers in a ſimilar way, with little riſk of diſpleaſing the Engliſh court. This ticklish treaty is ſtill in agitation, and reſembles the ſports of cats, which give a pat with one paw and a ſcratch with the other. The King of Pruſſia, driven out of Dreſden, and beaten by the Ruſſians, is in want of peace; and France, beaten at ſea by the Engliſh, and on ſhore by the Hanoverians, with an ill-timed loſs of men and

money,

money, is obliged to finiſh this ruinous war.

And this, beautiful Emily, is the point at which, for the preſent, we ſtop.

December 27, 1759.

I continue to write, and on ſingular events. The King of Pruſſia ended a letter to me on the 17th of November thus: *I ſhall write more fully from Dreſden, where I ſhall be in three days*; and the third day he was beaten by Marſhal ****, with the loſs of ten thouſand men. It ſeems to me, every thing I behold is the fable of the girl and her milk. Our great ſea-politician, Berrier,

formerly Lieutenant de Police at Paris, and who, from that poſt, became Secretary of State and Miniſter of the Marine, without ever having ſeen a veſſel larger than the ferry-boat at St. Cloude, or the barge of Auxerre; this Berrier, I ſay, took a fancy to fit out a fine fleet, and make a deſcent on England; but ſcarcely had the fleet peeped out of Breſt, before it was beaten by the Engliſh, broken upon the rocks, deſtroyed by the winds, or ſwallowed up by the ſeas.

We have ſeen one Silhoutte, made Comptroller-General of the Finances, of whom no man knew any thing except that he had tranſlated ſome of Pope's

poetry

poetry into profe. He was faid to be an eagle, but in lefs than a month the eagle was metamorphofed to an owl. He found the fecret of annihilating public credit to that degree, that the State all at once wanted money to pay the troops. The King was obliged to fend his plate to the Mint, and a great part of the kingdom followed his example.

January 1ſt, 1760.

Frederic muft be perfidious; he has fent my confidential letters to London, and has endeavoured to few diffenfion betwixt us and our allies. All kind of perfidies, permitted to a Grand King of Pruffia, has he acted; even to the making

of

of verſes, for thoſe he muſt ever make. I ſent them to Verſailles, doubting they would be accepted. He will cede nothing; and propoſes, in order to indemnify the Elector of Saxony, that they ſhall give him Erford, which belongs to the Elector of Mentz. He always muſt rob ſomebody; it is his way. We ſhall ſee the reſult of all this, and of the campaign they are going to make.

As this great and horrid tragedy has ever had a mixture of the comic, ſo they have lately printed at Paris, *Des Poeſies ouf da King mine Maſter*, as Freïtag ſays; in which there is an epiſtle to Marſhal Keith, where he ridicules chriſtianity,

and

and mocks at the immortality of the ſoul. The devotees are diſpleaſed; the Calviniſt clergy murmur. Theſe pedants looked upon him as a ſupport to the good cauſe. When he threw the Magiſtrates of Leipſic into dungeons, and ſold their beds to get their money, he had the admiration of ſuch Prieſts; but when he amuſes himſelf by tranſlating paſſages from Seneca, Lucretius, and Cicero, they look upon him as a monſter.

Prieſts would canonize Cartouche or Jonathan Wild, were they devotees.

THE END.